

VOA Special English Development Report

WORLD TB DAY

This is Bill White with the VOA Special English Development Report.

World TB Day was March 24th. Tuberculosis is a serious disease that mainly affects the lungs. It is caused by bacteria. It spreads easily when a person with the disease coughs or sneezes. In serious cases, it causes coughing up blood, chest pain, high body temperature, weight loss and death. TB usually can be cured with medicines.

In Amsterdam, The Netherlands, ministers from 20 countries signed a declaration to act against tuberculosis. The ministers were attending the Conference on TB and Sustainable Development. They represented countries that have some of the highest TB rates in the world.

The ministers agreed to establish effective systems to provide patients with medicines to fight TB. They also agreed to provide medicines for people who have a kind of TB that is resistant to drugs. And they declared they would work to develop an effective vaccine to prevent the disease.

In the past few years, the number of drug-resistant cases of TB has been increasing around the world. However, drug-resistant cases are more common in poor nations.

The Stop TB program organized by the World Health Organization recently released its report. It says 98 percent of the two million TB deaths each year are in developing countries. The report also says 95 percent of the eight million new TB cases each year are in poor countries.

And the report says social and economic progress is slowed by TB. For example, the average TB patient is too sick to work about three months a year. Seventy-five percent of TB patients are between 15 and 54 years old. That period of life is generally the most economically productive. The report says those non-productive periods cause major economic losses in many countries.

The WHO, the World Bank and the United States Centers for Disease Control recently studied the effectiveness of the WHO treatment program for TB. For example, India began the treatment program seven years ago. The researchers found TB cure rates have increased by two times among Indian patients who received the treatment. And they found that deaths from TB dropped by 25 percent.

The TB treatment program also has been effective in Peru, Tanzania, and Vietnam.

This VOA Special English Development Report was written by Caty Weaver. This is Bill White .

Source: Voice of America, 4/03/2000

Re-posted by eigozai
No. 0098pdf (387 words)