

Minister Jane Philpott
United Nations High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis
September 26, 2018

Excellencies, Indigenous representatives, Delegates

I'm honoured to speak on this traditional territory of the Lenape people.

Tuberculosis is the world's leading infectious killer. New scientific discoveries, increased political will and financial resources have made the elimination of tuberculosis closer than ever. By working together and taking decisive action we *can* end this pandemic.

Canada is committed to developing an effective accountability framework with the WHO and others. More innovative and gender-responsive approaches are needed; hence, Canada supports TB REACH and is pleased to confirm that the next call for proposals will focus on empowering women in the TB response.

We cannot speak of global leadership, however, without addressing inequities in our own backyard. Although Canada is an affluent country, the fact is that for Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat – the Inuit homeland – the rate of TB is more than *300 times* higher than in the Canadian-born, non-Indigenous population.

This reality is unacceptable. For World TB Day this year, the Government of Canada, together with Inuit leaders, committed to working with all partners to eliminate TB among Inuit by 2030 and to reduce the incidence of active TB by at least 50% by 2025.

Inuit are driving Canada's joint response for this initiative. The control of resources to implement action plans to prevent and treat TB and address the socioeconomic factors that drive this scourge will be led by Inuit.

I am honoured to be here with Natan Obed, President of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and Aluki Kotierk, President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

To quote President Obed: "Inuit have had a long history of colonialism in our communities that has allowed TB to flourish. We are working through our own Inuit governance structures to develop regionalized approaches to address the TB epidemic among Inuit, knowing that we need more than just public health interventions. We also need to set priorities that create social equity for our communities.

"TB is a symptom of the social inequity Inuit experience in Canada. We need to reduce the amount of overcrowding in our communities, improve access to quality and socially relevant nutrition, reduce poverty, and increase access to health services as part of a holistic treatment to TB." [endquote]

Let us all make bold commitments and back them with adequate resources.

Thank you, Nakurmiik, Merci