

# ADVANCING PREVENTION



For Immediate Release

## Media Release

**51st Union World Conference on Lung Health to be held virtually 20-24 October 2020**

**Dr Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and a member of the White House COVID-19 taskforce to deliver keynote address on COVID-19 science**

**Wednesday 12 August, 2020 (Paris, France)**-- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) has announced today that [the 51<sup>st</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health](#) (Union World Conference) will be virtual. Originally planned to be held in Seville in Spain, the event will continue to host a programme featuring cutting edge science around tuberculosis (TB), air pollution and tobacco control, but also deliver a track and special sessions dedicated to COVID-19 and its intersection with lung health and infectious diseases.

**Dr Anthony Fauci**, Director of NIAID and a member of the White House COVID-19 taskforce, will deliver a keynote address on COVID-19 science.

“While many people around the world are witnessing first-hand the hardship and disruption that an infectious disease can cause, for those of us dedicated to ending TB and lung disease globally, this is in many ways familiar territory,” said **José Luis Castro**, Executive Director of The Union.

“Therefore, the theme of this year’s conference *Advancing Prevention* could not be more appropriate in light of the threat of COVID-19 and the urgent need to re-assess the importance of pandemic preparedness going forward.

“We are delighted that Dr Fauci has agreed to participate and we will make committed steps to ensure that this year’s Union World Conference is a key platform for scientists, community, policy makers and political leaders to both deliver and promote solutions that can contribute towards getting us on the path to ending the pandemic. It will also be critical that we evaluate the pandemic’s impact on the progress we’ve made in responding to TB and lung health issues that continue to kill millions every year.”

It is [estimated](#) that globally, a three-month lockdown and a protracted 10-month restoration could lead to an additional 6.3 million people falling ill with TB and an additional 1.4 million TB deaths over the next five years. That would result in a setback of at least five to eight years in the fight against TB – bringing 2021 global TB incidence and deaths to levels not seen since 2013 and 2016 respectively – due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Much of the trauma that COVID-19 patients have gone through, TB survivors have suffered for years,” said UK Film and TV Actress **Claire Forlani**, The Union’s TB Ambassador. Forlani will also address the Union World Conference.

“COVID-19 is shining a light on TB and in particular on the mental impact of living with respiratory diseases like COVID-19.”

In addition to tracks on COVID-19 and its intersections with lung health, the Union World Conference programme will feature basic and translational TB research at the TBScience 2020 event and will virtually host its regular Community Connect space.

[Media Registration](#) is open and free to all accredited media representatives.

See how The Union is supporting the [COVID-19 response](#).

#### **Further Information:**

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#### **About the [51st Union World Conference on Lung Health](#)**

The Union World Conference on Lung Health, convened by the [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases \(The Union\)](#), is the world's largest gathering of clinicians and public health workers, health programme managers, policymakers, researchers and advocates working to end the suffering caused by lung disease, with a focus specifically on the challenges faced by low-and lower-middle income populations. Of the 10 million people who die each year from lung diseases, some 80 percent live in these resource-limited settings.

Organising international conferences on TB and related subjects has been a core activity of The Union since its founding in 1920.

**Twitter:** @UnionConference

#### **About the [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease \(The Union\)](#)**

The Union was founded in 1920 and is the world's first global health organisation. We are a global leader in ending TB, we fight the tobacco industry, and we solve key problems in treating major diseases. We use science to design the best treatments and policies for the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. The Union's members, staff and consultants operate in more than 140 countries and embody our core values of accountability, independence, quality and solidarity.

**Twitter:** @TheUnion\_TBLH