



For Immediate Release

Media Release

Her Imperial Highness Crown Princess Akishino of Japan confirmed to attend the 51st Union World Conference on Lung Health

Thursday 8th, October, 2020 (Paris, France)-- The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is privileged to announce that **Her Imperial Highness (HIH) Crown Princess Akishino of Japan** will attend the [51st Union World Conference on Lung Health](#), to be held virtually for the first time from 20-24 October 2020, and will speak at the conference Opening Ceremony on 20 October.

As Patroness of the Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association (JATA), **HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan** will also give a speech at the Presentation Ceremony of the Princess Chichibu Memorial TB Global Award during the Closing Ceremony on 24 October.

HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan also attended the 49th Union World Conference on Lung Health at The Hague in 2018. She joined numerous sessions, and presented the Princess Chichibu Memorial TB Global Award recognising outstanding contributions to global tuberculosis (TB) control.

At the General Assembly of members, HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan was awarded with the title of Honorary Member of The Union, in recognition of her active participation in our mission and her lifelong commitment to ending TB.

In a message of support on World TB Day in March 2020, HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan said: “No matter what kind of background we have, ending TB and other infectious diseases is a goal that unites the world in common cause. And I will continue to partner with The Union in my advocacy, in solidarity with all the people making efforts to fight against TB.”

In her role as Patroness of JATA, a heritage member of The Union, HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan has worked with medical professionals, volunteers and local communities to promote public awareness of TB and other health issues since 1994.

José Luis Castro, Executive Director of The Union, said: “It is a huge honour and privilege that HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan will return to our Union World Conference this year. Her influence and steadfast commitment to ending TB will act as a powerful example to leaders worldwide, who must drive the meaningful policy change needed if we are to collectively advance prevention of TB and lung disease.”

HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan will be joined at the event by [Her Royal Highness Princess Dina Mired of Jordan](#), **Shannon Hader**, UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director, [Dr Anthony Fauci](#), Director of NIAID and a member of the White House COVID-19 taskforce,

Claire Forlani, UK Film and TV Actress and The Union's TB Ambassador, and **Katherine Maher**, CEO of the Wikimedia Foundation.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union World Conference will now take place virtually this year. Originally planned to be held in Seville, Spain, the event will continue to host a programme featuring cutting edge science around TB, air pollution and tobacco control, but will also deliver a track and special sessions dedicated to COVID-19 and its intersection with lung health and infectious diseases. The theme of this year's conference is *Advancing Prevention*.

The Union World Conference will feature a special focus on the intersection of TB and lung health with COVID-19. Numerous studies evaluating the pandemic's impact on national TB programmes in Nigeria, Japan, Tibet, Uganda and Belarus will be presented. Some 400 TB survivors have already registered as delegates for the Union World Conference.

It has been [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.

ENDS

Full Union Conference Programme [is available here](#).

[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 Her Imperial Highness Crown Princess Akishino of Japan

HIH Crown Princess Akishino of Japan is the Patroness of JATA, which is a heritage member of The Union. Since her succession into this role in 1994, she has worked with medical professionals, volunteers and communities to raise awareness of TB. In 2018 she attended the 49th Union World Conference in The Hague, where she was awarded with the title of Honorary Member of The Union, in recognition of her active participation of our mission and her lifelong commitment to ending TB.

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

The Union World Conference on Lung Health, convened by [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 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