

ADVANCING PREVENTION

For Immediate Release

Media Release

Leading scientists Michael T Osterholm and Maria Van Kerkhove to participate in official COVID-19 plenary session at the [51st Union World Conference on Lung Health](#)

Complete conference scientific programme unveiled

Tuesday 13th October, 2020 (Paris, France)— A key plenary session on COVID-19 featuring epidemiologist **Dr Michael T Osterholm** of the University of Minnesota and **Maria Van Kerkhove**, Head of the WHO's Emerging Diseases Unit, will headline the [conference programme](#) of the [51st Union World Conference on Lung Health](#) (Union World Conference) taking place virtually October 20-24. The conference is convened by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), the world's first global health NGO, which is also celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

Originally planned to be held in Seville, Spain, the Union World Conference will continue to host a programme featuring cutting edge science around TB, air pollution and tobacco control, but will also focus prominently on the COVID-19 pandemic and its intersection with lung health and infectious diseases. The theme of this year's conference is *Advancing Prevention*.

Osterholm and Kerkhove will be joined at the conference by [Her Imperial Highness Crown Princess Akishino of Japan](#), [President Bill Clinton](#), World Health Organization Director-General [Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#), UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director [Shannon Hader](#), NIAID Director [Dr Anthony Fauci](#), UK Film and TV Actress and The Union's TB Ambassador [Claire Forlani](#), and [Katherine Maher](#), CEO of the Wikimedia Foundation.

"In these challenging times it is fitting that so many esteemed scientific and global health leaders are gathering together under the one virtual roof at the world's leading lung health conference in the world," said **José Luis Castro**, Executive Director of The Union. "It is a timely opportunity to affirm that scientific evidence-based policy must be paramount in our response to all infectious diseases, whether that be TB or COVID-19."

COVID-19 highlights (NB: Programme subject to changes)

Special Session: SARS-CoV2: The hope for a vaccine

Wednesday, October 21, 09:00-10:20 EST/15:00-16:20 CEST

Precious Matsoso, South Africa (moderator)

Anthony Fauci, Director, NIAID & member of the White House COVID-19 Taskforce, U.S.

Suerie Moon, Co-Director at the Global Health Centre, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva Graduate Institute, Geneva, Switzerland

Jeffrey Lazarus, Head of the Health Systems Research Group, Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), Spain

Plenary Session 2: COVID-19, Major disrupter, new opportunities

Thursday October 22, 08:00-09:00 EST/14:00-15:00 CEST

Andrew Jack, Financial Times, UK (Moderator)

Michael T Osterholm, Director, Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, University of Minnesota, U.S.

Maria Van Kerkhove, Head of the WHO's Emerging Diseases Unit, Switzerland

Allan Maleche, Executive Director, Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)

Special Session 2: COVID-19: Different strokes

Thursday October 22, 09:00-10:20 EST/15:00-16:20 CEST

Linda-Gail Bekker, Director of the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, (Moderator)

Abdoulaye Bousso, Director, Health Emergency Operation Centre, Senegal

Glenda Gray, President, South African Medical Research Council, South Africa

Jodie McVernon, Professor & Director of Epidemiology, University of Melbourne at The Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity & Royal Melbourne Hospital, Australia

Symposia: COVID-19 in Pregnant Women

Saturday, October 24, 06:30-07:50 EST/12:30-13:50 CEST

Kristina Adams Waldorf, Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology, University of Washington, U.S.

Malavika Prabhu, Maternal Fetal Medicine Physician, New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine, U.S.

Moupali Das, Executive Director, HIV and Emerging Viruses, Gilead Sciences, U.S.

Anna Thorson, Research Manager, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research Department, WHO, Switzerland

Lung Health Plenary Sessions

Plenary Session 1: Prevention supports cure

Wednesday October 21, 08:00-09:00 EST/ 14:00-15:00 CEST

J Chakaya Muhwa, Past President of the Union, Kenya, (Moderator)

Helen McShane, Professor of Vaccinology, Nuffield Department of Medicine, UK

Rovina Ruslami, Professor in clinical pharmacology, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

Arne von Delft, Co-Founder, TB Proof, South Africa

Plenary Session 3: Striving for Universal Health Coverage

Friday, October 23, 08:00-09:00 EST/ 14:00-15:00 CEST

Rosemary Mburu, Director WACI Health (Moderator)

Elizabeth Iro, Chief Nursing Officer, WHO

Erika Mohr-Holland, Epidemiologist, MSF, South Africa

Prachi Kathuria, Secretariat, Healthy India Alliance, India

Plenary Session 4: Greed, smoke and lung health

Saturday, 24 October 2020, 08:00-09:00 EST/ 14:00-15:00 CEST

Asma El Sony, Head of scientific Activities, Epidemiological Laboratory Epi-Lab Khartoum Sudan /International Public Health Expert, Sudan (Moderator)

Jorgen Vestbo, Professor of Respiratory Medicine, Manchester University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, UK

Fay Johnstone, Associate Professor, Public Health and Primary Care Theme, Menzies Institute for Medical Research University of *Tasmania* University of Tasmania, Australia

Elvis Ndikum Achiri, Civic Leader & President Association for the Promotion of Youth Leadership, Advocacy and Volunteerism (APYLAV), Cameroon

ENDS

Full Union Conference Programme 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 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