



## RESULTS Canada

## 2018 UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis Policy Brief Series: TB and Gender

### *What's at Stake?*

Tuberculosis (TB) is the world's leading infectious killer, claiming 1.7 million lives every year. Our global progress to fight the disease is off-track and requires serious and dedicated global political leadership. In September 2018, the United Nations (UN) will hold a high-level meeting on TB. The UN High-Level Meeting (HLM) on TB is a crucial opportunity to bolster and align world leaders' commitments to tackling TB. This policy series is intended to increase attention to the HLM on TB in Canada and to ensure that civil society is engaged in shaping the direction and impact it will have.

Gender is an area often neglected by those seeking to end the TB epidemic. While men tend to disproportionately contract the disease, TB has a significant impact on women worldwide. TB is one of the top five leading causes of death among women aged 20-59. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where the prevalence of HIV is high, TB is the third leading cause of death for women.

A complex interplay of biological factors and cultural notions of gender drive the variations in how TB is experienced differently among men and women. Despite these differences, there is a significant lack of research on how TB uniquely affects women. Pregnant women and young mothers for example represent a neglected population in TB care and prevention. The impact of TB, and particularly TB-HIV coinfection is deeply felt among women of reproductive age.

Women often face significant social, cultural and financial barriers to TB care. TB is a family disease and female caregivers often feel the greatest impact. Successful interventions for TB are likely to look quite different for men than they would for women, and these approaches need to be adapted to local settings and require a gendered approach.

While the international community is starting to acknowledge the importance of addressing women and TB, few models, best practices, or funding schemes support TB interventions that meaningfully engage or focus on women. Canada has solidified its position as a global leader on promoting gender equity through its Feminist International Assistance Policy. To continue its commitment, Canada can ensure it takes a leadership role at the upcoming UN HLM on TB so that moving forward, better consideration of gender dimensions can help to improve the prevention and treatment of TB on a global scale.

#### **Civil Society Opportunities:**

**Before the HLM:** Now is the time to influence the political declaration agreed to by the UN members.

**During the HLM:** As in previous HLMs, including on HIV/AIDS, civil society must be represented in all sessions and panels.

**After the HLM:** We must work with the government of Canada to ensure that an agreed upon accountability framework is effective and utilized.

# The Unique Stigma Women Face

“How can it be that a disease that is somehow passable for a man can threaten the social fabric of a woman’s life? TB stigma in women is really a reflection of gender inequity.” - *Dr. Amrita Daftary, TB researcher, McGill University, Canada.*

Women with TB in India are far more prone to stigma than men. Indian women often report being isolated and discriminated against in their homes, rejected by husbands and in-laws, or taken off the “marriage market”.

Continue reading the blog [HERE](#)



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## TAKE ACTION

Together we can shape a successful HLM on TB with strong Canadian leadership:

- **Attend the ICAD & RESULTS Canada webinar series:** TB, Gender and the HLM: Thursday, May 10, 2018. [Register on Eventbrite.](#)
- **Ask Prime Minister Trudeau to attend the HLM on TB in September.** Success will require the highest levels of government attend. An early announcement from Canada will also help to encourage other global leaders. Write a letter or tweet to PM Trudeau. Click [HERE](#) for more resources.
- **Stay informed:** Visit ICAD’s website on the HLM on TB [HERE](#), or reach out to RESULTS Canada’s TB Officer for resources and more information about the Canadian and global civil society activities that you can get involved in, including the global civil society list serve (email: [shelley@results-resultats.ca](mailto:shelley@results-resultats.ca)).

### Goals for the HLM on TB:

- Attended by heads of state.
- Engages civil society throughout the process.
- Communities affected by TB are at the centre of all decisions.
- Reflects Canadian priorities and highlights Canadian leadership.

### About RESULTS Canada

RESULTS Canada combines the voices of our grassroots advocates with strategic advocacy efforts to leverage millions of dollars for programs and improved policies that give the world’s poorest people the health, education, and opportunity they need to thrive.

[www.results-resultats.ca](http://www.results-resultats.ca)

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