

## Gates gives \$600m more to stop TB

By Tim Weber  
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**The Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis has received a \$600m (£337m) boost from Microsoft chairman Bill Gates.**

The campaign, backed by more than 400 organisations worldwide, aims to treat 50 million people in the next 10 years.

Launching the plan with UK Chancellor Gordon Brown and Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Mr Gates said it was a "chance to save 14 million lives".

Mr Gates has already committed \$300m to the programme, but the total cost of the plan will be \$56bn over 10 years.

**This is a tragedy because the disease is completely curable**  
Dr David Moore

On Thursday, Mr Brown had told parliament that the UK would contribute £41.7m (\$75m) to tackle tuberculosis in India, as part of the new plan to fight the disease.

The programme was launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"Every 15 seconds somebody dies of TB, avoidably, preventably," said Mr Brown.

### Global epidemic

Innovations in finding treatments for diseases like TB had to be assisted by finance ministers around the world providing innovative ways of financing such programmes, he said.

Mr Brown and Mr Obasanjo pledged to push for making the fight against TB a priority for the G8 group of industrialised countries and the African Union respectively.

"The Global Plan is fundamental for Africa, where tuberculosis was declared an emergency by 46 countries in 2005," Mr Obasanjo said.

Marcus Espinal, in charge of the TB programme of the World Health Organization, predicted that "we will break the back of the global TB epidemic".

With 15 diagnostic tests and 28 new medicines in development, it should be possible to revolutionise the treatment of tuberculosis, shrink treatment time and beat drug resistance, he said.

A tuberculosis vaccine could be developed by 2012, he predicted.

Mr Espinal said it was poignant that the programme was launched in Davos, once famous around the world for its TB sanatorium and setting for Thomas Mann's book *The Magic Mountain*.

The plan aims to implement one of the United Nations' Millennium Goals, which called for a halt in the spread of TB and progress in reducing incidences of the disease by 2015.

The Global Fund hopes to spend about \$47bn on TB treatment and control, and \$9bn on research and development.

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