

# World Tuberculosis Day (TB) Statement

## 24 March 2024

Tuberculosis (TB) is the ninth leading cause of deaths worldwide, ranking above HIV/AIDS. Globally, 10.6 million people developed TB while an estimated 1.6 million people died of TB in 2021 alone. Despite progress made in the last two decades, the incidence of TB is not declining fast enough to end the disease. In Zimbabwe, an estimated 29,945 people developed active TB in 2021 and only 16,541 were diagnosed and put on treatment. (WHO 2023).

Zimbabwe Council of Churches Health Commission joins the rest of the world to commemorate the 2024 World Tuberculosis (TB) Day under the theme "Yes! We an End TB". This theme aligns to our strategic plan 2023-2025 and induces hope for multisectoral efforts to end TB by 2030.

The commemorations are coming at a time when Zimbabwe continues leveraging on the launched Multi-Sectoral Accountability Framework for TB (MAF-TB) launched on the 17th of January 2023). This is the time when religious voices are needed the most and when the church is key in raising awareness, providing preventive, treatment services, pastoral care and counselling to both affected and infected families.

The church is encouraged by the collaborative work between the government and development partners to devise more effective preventive and treatment strategies towards ending TB by the year 2030

TB infection is influenced by determinants such as malnutrition and HIV infection, drugs and substance abuse amongst others. The church continues to address such determinants as food security through programs such as food assistance and agriculture programs . Above all Risk Communication and Community Engagement via the pulpit has remained key.

The church has maintained consistent messaging on upholding moral values discouraging risk and promiscuous behaviour that increases vulnerability and also delays recuperation. Ensuring equitable access to prevention, treatment and care services for the diseases across communities remains important. The church, through its healthcare institutions across Zimbabwe continues to provide such services .However more funding support is required to ensure adequate provision of TB and TB/HIV services across Zimbabwe.

The Addis Ababa Commitment towards shared responsibility and Global Solidarity for increased health financing declaration calls for mobilising adequate domestic resources for health care to reach all who need it. The church denotes the urgent need to intensify efforts to mobilise additional funds from both international donors and national sources. We write to other religious bodies to join hands demonstrating leadership towards ending TB

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches remains committed to eliminate TB and improve the lives of the generality of the Zimbabwean population.

**"Yes! We can End TB".**