

OBIAGELI K. EZEKWESILI
Vice President,
Africa Region

April 1, 2008

Mr. Andrew George MP
Member of Parliament for West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Tuberculosis
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Hon. MP George,

Re: Global Tuberculosis

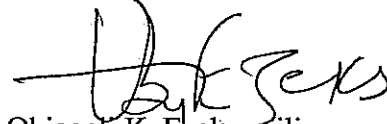
On behalf of Mr. Zoellick, I would like to thank you for your letter of March 13, 2008, which is timely in light of the recent commemoration of World TB Day, and new TB developments at the World Bank. I would also like to acknowledge your leadership on tuberculosis, which remains one of the key public health challenges of our times.

Let me assure you that the Africa Region has renewed its commitment to tuberculosis control and is actively scaling-up TB control into HIV/AIDS and health operations in the most afflicted countries. HIV/AIDS operations in Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Nigeria, and Swaziland will bolster capacity to address TB/HIV co-infection. Under the Rwanda HIV/AIDS operation we are supporting performance contracting, which has stimulated innovative strategies such as TB case-finding by community workers. Our engagement in Kenya is leading towards an increased focus on TB.

The Bank shares your concerns on the emerging challenge of drug-resistant TB. In the Bank's World TB Day Press release, President Robert Zoellick noted that drug resistance in Southern Africa is becoming an increasing threat to the hard-won health and development gains in the region. Given the stakes involved, he noted the need to step up efforts in concert with our African partners, as part of the drive to strengthen health systems. Under my guidance, the Africa region is currently developing a plan to strengthen the regional laboratory network, which we view as a critical gap to addressing drug-resistant TB and improving diagnosis of co-infected people. In line with our focus on Global Public Goods the region will also ensure that critical national gaps in TB control are adequately addressed and financed.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to invite you to visit our spring meetings website which features additional materials on TB in an on-going effort to raise awareness. Finally, let me reiterate our commitment to setting Africa on a path of success for meeting the Millennium Development Goals, including for TB, as well as my personal commitment to work towards a world free of TB.

Best personal wishes,



Obiageli K. Ezekwesili
Vice President
Africa Region

cc.: Mr. Alexander Gibbs
World Bank Executive Director for the United Kingdom