

million people die from TB every year, half a million with concurrent HIV infection.

Although TB is curable, only 23% of people with active TB have access to DOTS, formerly an acronym for “directly observed treatment short-course”, but now a “brand name” for a broader anti-TB package.

Unless the current trend can be reversed, says WHO, there will be 10.2 million new TB cases a year by 2005. And the goal of detecting 70% of cases through DOTS and curing 85% of them will not be reached until 2013 — eight years later than the global target set at a ministerial conference held in Amsterdam in March 2000. And that’s not to mention multidrug-resistant TB, which is on the increase in many places, particularly in the former Soviet Union, where it has been encountered in up to 14% of new TB cases.

The Global TB Drug Facility was launched in Washington DC on 21 March, with an initial US\$ 10 million from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The first grants have now been approved to provide drugs to treat almost 200 000 patients in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe.

Dr Jacob Kumaresan, executive secretary of the WHO-based Stop TB partnership, told the *Bulletin*: “The drugs used to treat TB have been available for over three decades, and the 6–8 month course of treatment for TB costs as little as US\$ 10–15. But shortages of TB drugs are frequent and serious, often caused by financial constraints, inefficient drug procurement systems, and poor management. With the TB Drug Facility we will be able to ensure an uninterrupted supply of high-quality drugs, which should help to expand rapidly the use of DOTS.”

Meanwhile, sympathisers of the anti-TB movement have taken advantage of World TB Day to give material expression to their support: the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced a gift of US\$ 10 million to the WHO-based tropical disease research programme (TDR) to fund the development of better diagnostic tests for TB, and the Dutch government offered 20 million Dutch Guilders (about US\$ 8 million) to the Stop TB partnership. ■

Sheila Davey, *Geneva, Switzerland*

Winning drawing of WHO’s mental health contest



This drawing is how Dhruva Suri, a 7-year-old boy from New Delhi, India, responded to WHO’s call for a picture of how a child with a brain disorder might experience his or her “difference”. On 7 April, Suri was declared winner of WHO’s global school contest in the 6–9-year-old category by an international jury. More than 70 countries and thousands of children took part in the contest, which was organized as part of World Health Day (7 April) celebrations, devoted this year to mental

health. The contest aimed, said Dr Benedetto Saraceno, head of WHO’s mental health programme, “to draw young people into the debate on how we can make good mental health a reality for everybody”. An essay competition, on a mental health topic, was organized for older children. The winners were two girls, Tang Shu-wei, 14, of China, for the 10–14-year-old category, and Bibbie Kumangai, 17, of Palau, for the 15–18-year-old category.