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MEDIA STATEMENT

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BRICS TB Research Network to accelerate research and innovation through collaboration across the BRICS countries

Johannesburg: The National Department of Health is hosting the third BRICS TB Research Network Meeting, over 28 – 29 June 2018, in Johannesburg with delegates from the World Health Organization, Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa. The meeting is part of the multi-country vision to accelerate research and innovation in TB through the BRICS cooperation mechanisms. This is a preparatory meeting in advance of the forthcoming BRICS Ministers of Health meeting scheduled to take place from 18 - 20 July 2018 in Durban.

The BRICS TB Research Network is set against the backdrop of TB epidemic where in 2016, there were an estimated 10.4 million new TB cases globally, with BRICS accounting for about 40% of the global TB disease burden and mortality, and at least 50% of the global multidrug resistant TB cases.

Considering the burden of tuberculosis in the BRICS countries and the research capacity within these five countries, the BRICS TB Research Network was established to develop robust research into new tools, diagnostics, vaccines and drugs and to inform and accelerate the best use of existing and new interventions in TB control and prevention. “We want BRICS to take the lead in a process that will contribute to the elimination of TB by investing in health care innovation, drug discovery and development,” says Ms Precious Matsoso, Director General of Health Department, South Africa.

The investing in health care innovation was also highlighted at the recent 5th SA TB Conference, held 12-15 June 2018 at Durban ICC. The Department of Health and South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) hosted satellite sessions, showcasing the cutting-edge TB research and developed an interactive exhibition that resonated with the theme of the conference, “**Step Up, and Let’s Embrace All to End TB!**”

“Meanwhile the President of the SAMRC Professor Glenda said described this Network as an endeavour to collaborate with BRICS ministries of health and scientists to address the problems of TB in BRICS and to raise resources to find local solutions.

“Collaborating on such platforms is how the South Africa can strengthen our efforts to end TB” says Dr Barry Kistnasamy. South Africa is extending its research network in BRICS by developing partnerships in BRICS who share a vision of ending TB.

Among the deliverables of the current Meeting, the partners are looking to map the tuberculosis scientific landscape among the BRICS countries and generate collaborative research project proposals covering diagnostics, vaccines, drugs, infection control for TB and patient centred delivery and care.

BRICS TB Research Network:

The BRICS TB Research Network is an outcome of the BRICS TB Cooperation Plan approved in the 6th Health Ministers Meeting in New Delhi, 2016, and supported by BRICS Heads of States, as agreed in the Xiamen Declaration, 2017. The Network's key objectives include identifying scientific research, development and innovation, fostering development of new effective, safe and affordable diagnostics and treatment regimens for all forms of TB, and conducting multi-country TB studies.

For more information and media enquiries, please contacts:

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