

Pioneering the response:

Demanding industry action in the fight against TB in gold mining

In March this year we ran our UK wide film screening and advocacy tour of *They Go To Die*, a film which deals with the TB epidemic in the Gold Mining industry of Southern Africa – a health crisis responsible for 760,000 TB cases every year. Since then we have seen some incredible success in our campaign, with donors, regional heads of state and the World Bank committing resources and political will to combatting the problem.

However the mining industry itself has been less forthcoming. This month we will be writing to AngloGold Ashanti (AGA), the largest gold miner in the Southern African region and a company with a listing on the London Stock Exchange calling for them to step up their response. AGA has been a real leader within the industry in developing best practice for tackling TB, but they and the other mining companies need to do more.

Take action: Email the VP for health and safety Brian Chicksen (bchicksen@anglogoldashanti.com) of AngloGold Ashanti and their UK company secretary Jane Kirton (jane.kirton@corpserv.co.uk) or write at Ms Jane Kirton, United Kingdom Secretaries, St. James's Corporate Services Ltd. 6 St James's Place London SW1A 1NP) :

- Thank them for all the work that AGA has been doing on stepping up their response to TB and Mining, including the launch of their TB control program in 2011
- Explain that initial World Bank analysis suggests that an upfront investment from mining companies of \$760 million could reap an \$880 million reward
- Call for AGA to do more to prevent TB in their mines by putting an end to single sex, hostel style housing in and around all of their mines and;
- Introduce silica dust-disseminating technology to reduce dust levels in all mines to >0.025mg per m³ as is the standard for mines in Canada and the USA
- Finally, ask them, as an industry leader and largest miner operating in the region, to lead this response among mining companies and to spearhead industry engagement with regional initiatives such as the Swaziland Statement and the forthcoming SADC Code of Conduct

TB in gold mining

Tuberculosis in Mining is one of the most pressing public health challenge faced by the world today. Mine workers in South Africa's gold mines have the highest rates of TB anywhere in the world, with an infection rate 28 times higher than that declared an emergency by the WHO (7,000 cases per 100,000 in miners; the WHO emergency point is 250 cases per 100,000; the UK has around 14 per 100,000).

This is an issue which affects the whole sub-region. The mining industry in South Africa relies heavily on migrant labour from surrounding countries including Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique. Each migrant miner who returns home with active TB will spread the disease to a further 10-15 people in their community each year. As a whole, mining activities are estimated to be responsible for around 760,000 new cases across the region each year; that's one in three of all new infections in the whole of Southern Africa. In addition to the human toll this brings, TB in the mining sector results in huge healthcare costs and greatly reduced productivity even outside the mining sector.

Why miners are so uniquely vulnerable to TB

A combination of physical, biological and social factors combine to create a 'perfect storm' of disease. High levels of HIV infection among miners (people living with HIV are 20-30 times more likely to develop TB), terribly overcrowded living conditions and exposure to silica dust which can lead to silicosis, combine to leave these men at dangerously high risk.

Increasing political will to tackle the problem

There has been a strong demonstration of political will for tackling the problem of TB in the mining industry. The ministers of health for Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa have shown extraordinary leadership in putting the issue of TB and Mining on the regional and global agenda. In March 2012 the Southern African Development Community (SADC) convened a meeting of stakeholders to provide their input into a Declaration on TB and Mining. This was signed in August 2012 by 16 heads of state and provides political will at the highest level and makes practical calls to:

1. Develop a regional action plan to fight TB
2. Develop a single database to track medical status of miners and ex-miners

3. Undertake economic analysis of the impact of TB on mining

The SADC Declaration also called for the development and implementation of a **Code of Conduct** to be applied to all mining companies operating in the region. The Code has been delayed slightly but should be available in mid-late 2013.

The Declaration was then followed in March 2013 by the **'Swaziland Statement'**. This was signed by a group of SADC Governments heads of State, Multilaterals (the World Bank, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB & Malaria), NGOs and the Governments of donor governments including the UK. The Statement commits signatories to stepping up their efforts at tackling TB and HIV with only 1000 days left to reach the international target of a 50% reduction in TB mortality from 1990 levels - a target the Southern African region will currently not meet, largely due to TB in Mining.

Response from the UK

As a signatory of the 'Swaziland Statement', the UK has made a clear declaration of intent to deal with this issue. Justine Greening (Secretary of State for International Development) has stated repeatedly that the UK is preparing a project for combatting TB in mining that will bring together stakeholders from industry, NGOs and key multilaterals. To begin this work, the UK pledged \$220,000 to a match funding program for tackling TB in mining.

World Bank response

As a member of the SADC Coalition that signed the Swaziland Statement, the World Bank is conducting an economic analysis on the impact of TB in the mining sector and the cost of investing in improved prevention policies, treatment, and follow-up. Currently, the Bank is collecting data and interviewing groups within South Africa and the analysis should be finalized in late 2013.

But where is the mining industry?

Any realistic response to TB in gold mining has to engage fully with all the regional actors to stand a chance of success. Governments, NGOs and the industry must be working together to ensure success; yet despite this, the industry itself is conspicuously absent, with no mining companies having signed the Swaziland Statement, and no clear action having been taken to address the issue.

Every year, there is a "Mining Indaba" held in South Africa. It is an annual professional conference dedicated to the funding and development of mining interests in Africa, and it is the world's largest mining investment conference and Africa's largest mining event with over 1,800 mining companies in attendance. The Mining Indaba in February 2014 should be a moment for companies to come to the table and make real commitments to bringing these diseases under control. This month, **we want you to make sure mining companies know that there is strong civil society support for the industry to lead the way in developing the regional response.**

Why AngloGold Ashanti?

We are targeting AngloGold Ashanti for three reasons. Firstly, they are the largest gold miner operating in South Africa, running seven large gold mines in South Africa alone; this gives them serious influence among the small and medium sized mines also operating in the region. Secondly, they have a secondary listing on the London Stock Exchange giving us, as UK tax payers, the opportunity to demand high human rights and corporate social responsibility standards. Finally, AGA have so far proven themselves to be an industry leader in providing a response to occupational TB. Many of their pilot programs are first class and have demonstrated incredible results. We want them to build on this good record, do more, and take the rest of the industry with them.

What are we asking?

Our first asks to AGA are calling on them to do more to prevent occupational TB, silicosis and HIV in and around their mines. An end to single sex, hostel style housing and universal silica dust control technologies would represent an important first step in bringing these diseases under control in their own mines. We are also calling on AGA to use its position as the industry leader to bring other mining companies with them as they lead the response to occupational TB, HIV and silicosis. Finally we are calling on them to lead the way in developing industry engagement with the crucial SADC processes around TB and Mining. As the industry leader it is key that AGA fully engage and cooperate with the health systems, NGOs and governments of the whole sub region, using their power, connections and resources to galvanise a response that will truly stand the test of time.