

To: Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, Chair of the Stop TB Coordinating Board, Minister of Health for South Africa

CC: Mr. Young Moo Lee, Executive Director, Kochon Foundation
Dr. Lucica Ditiu, Executive Secretary, Stop TB Partnership
Dr. Kenneth Castro, Member, Kochon Prize Selection Committee
Dr. Paula Fujiwara, Member, Kochon Prize Selection Committee
Dr. Mario Raviglione, Member, Kochon Prize Selection Committee
Dr. Mel Spigelman, Member, Kochon Prize Selection Committee

19 June 2014

Open letter: Ensuring the fair administration of the Kochon Prize

Dear Dr. Motsoaledi,

We are pleased to note that the Stop TB Partnership is now accepting nominations for the 2014 Kochon Prize.¹ The Kochon Prize is an important award that recognizes achievements toward ending tuberculosis. The award is not only a prestigious honor, but also a critical source of support for TB programs with limited funding around the world. We congratulate the Kochon Foundation for making this prize available, and acknowledge the essential contributions of the Stop TB Partnership and the Kochon Prize Selection Committee to the prize's administration.

We write you today to respectfully encourage the Stop TB Partnership Coordinating Board to ensure that the 2014 and all future prizes are awarded fairly based on merit.

We were extremely disappointed that the 2013 Kochon Prize was not given to the Selection Committee's original recommendation, the Delek Hospital in India. The Delek Hospital, a leading medical institution that has saved hundreds of lives in the Tibetan and Indian communities in India, perfectly embodied the 2013 Kochon Prize theme, "TB in conflict and refugee areas." Yet, as reported in the *Wall Street Journal*² and *The Lancet*³, the World Health Organization (WHO) ultimately overrode the Selection Committee's decision, intruding in what should be an independent decision-making process. This decision to let politics influence decisions in public health stands in direct contradiction to a recent statement from WHO Director General Dr. Margaret Chan herself, affirming that no one "should be intimidated by interested parties for doing the right thing in public health".⁴

¹ <http://www.stoptb.org/global/awards/kochon/>

² McKay, B. "TB Prize Selection Gets Caught in Politics," *The Wall Street Journal*. 26 November 26 2013.

³ Dorjee, K. WHO disapproves Kochon prize for Tibetan TB Programme. *The Lancet*, Volume 383, Issue 9920, Page 868, 8 March 2014. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60441-4

⁴ Saez, C. "WHO Director General: No Government Should Be Intimidated By Interested Parties," *Intellectual Property Watch*, 24 January 2014.



We urge the Stop TB Partnership Coordinating Board to preserve the admirable vision of the Kochon Prize, which is to award individuals or organizations “that have made a significant contribution to combating TB.” We ask you to please safeguard the Kochon Prize’s long-standing precedent of rewarding to the most deserving candidate.

We thank the Kochon Foundation, the Stop TB Partnership and the Selection Committee for their recognition of and support for achievements against TB since 2006, and look forward to the restoration of the award’s fairness and independence.

Sincerely,

The Global TB Community Advisory Board (TB CAB)