

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU URGES TB/HIV WORKERS TO CONTINUE TO RELIEVE SUFFERING FROM DUAL SCOURGES

Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa, September 28, 2005

Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa last night spoke to researchers and clinicians combating AIDS and tuberculosis and urged them to continue their challenging efforts to treat and prevent the “dual scourges.” Speaking at a dinner for members of the Consortium to Respond Effectively to the AIDS-TB Epidemic (CREATE), Archbishop Tutu exhorted the health workers to relieve the suffering experienced by those who are afflicted by the two highly linked diseases. Tutu, who himself suffered from TB as a young man, told the researchers “there are terrible, terrible things in the world,” such as AIDS, TB and the appalling social conditions which spawn the diseases, “but these conditions also bring out the most beautiful things in the world” in the form of those who chose to help fight them. He noted that the doctors and other health workers could have chosen easier and more lucrative careers, but instead have dedicated themselves to ridding the world of the deadly epidemics. “Those of you who work to care for people suffering from AIDS and TB are wiping a tear from God’s eye,” Archbishop Tutu said.

Archbishop Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his efforts to eliminate the South African apartheid system. He has been a tireless campaigner for health and human rights, and has been particularly vocal in support of controlling TB and HIV. CREATE is a global health consortium of investigators, clinicians, public health practitioners who are evaluating novel strategies to reduce TB burden in countries with high rates of HIV and TB. CREATE is coordinated by the Johns Hopkins Center for Tuberculosis Research and has multiple international partners. The Archbishop Desmond Tutu TB Centre at the University of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape is a leading institute in TB research and care. The director of the centre, Professor Nulda Beyers, is a co-principal investigator in a CREATE study, the Zambian-South African Tuberculosis and AIDS Reduction study (ZAMSTAR). CREATE is funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.