Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for honouring me with the invitation to speak to you this morning at the start of our two days together. We have a lot to do in a relatively short two days, and we must make these two days’ count.

Each of us must have some ideas about how to move the very important strategy that we have committed ourselves to forward. However, allow me to take the opportunity, at this early stage, to set out five principles and propose that they must guide our time together over these two days.

**First**, as I believe we now all know, TB is one of the great humanitarian and human rights crises of our time. This is demonstrably true as an empirical matter. TB is the world’s deadliest infectious disease. It takes at least 1.7 million lives a year. It is also true as a deeply personal matter. Those of you who know what it means to have TB or to endure the poison treatment for drug-resistant TB know that TB is most fundamentally a brutal affront to human dignity.

**Second**, an effective TB response must not only align to but indeed be born of human rights. Human rights should chart the course of the response to TB. They must be our true north if we are to win the war – and it is a war – against TB. And
win we must. The first part of the work of this meeting must therefore be to continue to define the content of a human rights-based response to TB.

**Third**, we share an understanding that advocacy, mobilization, and the pursuit of legal redress for rights violations are tools to be used in this work. It is our legal frameworks that in large part determine how we will address this crisis. We must therefore be in touch and dialogue with the institutions that make, implement and interpret these frameworks: our executive, legislative and judicial branches. This is the right and duty of citizenship. If the first part of our work involves defining the content of a human rights-based response to TB, then the second part of this meeting’s work must be to strategize and plan how we will work individually and collectively to bring into being, make a reality, that which we envisioned in the first part.

Our different skills and positions enable us to do this. For lawyers and networks of people with TB, it means, for instance, identifying appropriate, strategic litigation to safeguard the rights of persons with TB, or to prevent continued/further violation of the human rights of persons with TB. For persons within the judiciary, it means the application of human rights principles to cases that come before us, as the court did in the case of *Daniel Ngetich vs Attorney General*. For those in the executive, it requires a response to the structural interdicts issued by the courts, not as a challenge to executive authority, but as an opportunity to work towards the betterment of the lives of citizens. This is, I believe, what the Ministry of Health in Kenya has done in formulating and launching the first ever National Tuberculosis Isolation policy on 26 June 2018.

**Fourth**, just as TB crosses borders so too must our response. TB demands a global response. We must work at the international level. Yet while recognizing this, we
should reaffirm as well that the response must begin locally and rise upwards to collaboration at the international level. Our roots determine our strength and those roots must be in the communities we serve.

**Fifth and finally**, we must wage this fight as if it were a fight for our lives. Because it is. I invite the good people in this room to raise your hands if you or someone you love has been affected by TB. *[pause for crowd to raise hands]*

This is why we must win. It is also why we can win.

This meeting is neither the beginning nor the end of our efforts. We operate in countries with different legal and policy frameworks, different cultures, different political realities. We have all made and missed targets. We have all won and lost battles. What brings us together is a belief in human rights and a desire to make them real in this world by applying them to the global TB crisis. Let this then be an opportunity to sharpen our swords and to strategize on how we will support one another as we work collectively and individually to respond to this crisis.

Let us then turn to the work that lies ahead of us. It is a lot of hard and challenging work, but we must approach it with new energy and old wisdom, knowing that it is not easy, but that we have the will and determination to confront it successfully.

With that, I declare this meeting open. Let the work begin!