



Mr. Joaquin Duato
Chief Executive Officer
Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933
USA

22 September 2023

**Open letter requesting immediate action to ensure
universal, equitable and sustainable access to bedaquiline**

Dear Mr. Duato,

We acknowledge and value the investments Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has made to develop and market innovative medicines to treat Tuberculosis (TB).

Unitaid has also made significant investments in public funding to support the introduction of the life-saving anti-TB medicines in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs), including Johnson & Johnson's Sirturo® (bedaquiline). We recognize that innovation and equitable access to life-saving medicines like bedaquiline require collective efforts with industry partners. As such, we welcome the [recent price reduction](#) of bedaquiline realized through the STOP TB partnership/Global Drug Facility (GDF) tender, which is an important step towards increased access to more effective and appropriate treatment in LMICs for drug resistant TB (DR-TB), the most debilitating and deadly form of the disease.

At the same time, we express our disappointment that Johnson & Johnson, as the primary patent holder of bedaquiline for over 20 years, ignored the public health community's calls to secure comprehensive and fair access to bedaquiline, acting only when generic competition became inevitable and even then, not going far enough. Today Johnson & Johnson continues to enforce secondary patents in many of the countries with the highest burden of DR-TB, hindering generic manufacturer competition and impeding broader access to this critical medicine. The recent lower J&J price for bedaquiline is accessible only for countries eligible or willing to procure through GDF and therefore represents a partial, short-term solution. Upcoming tenders and further competition from multiple generic manufacturers are expected to lead to lower prices in some countries in the near future, once again leaving countries where secondary patents remain in force with unequal access.

We expect Johnson & Johnson to take immediate action to expand equitable access to bedaquiline for [all people](#) suffering from DR-TB and to this end call on Johnson & Johnson to:

- a) remove all secondary patents or provide comprehensive licenses to generic manufacturers
- b) make the lower GDF price available globally to all countries with a high burden of TB, including those currently excluded from the GDF agreement or not procuring through GDF

Johnson & Johnson is in a unique position to show commitment to global health and its public sector partners by allowing equitable access to affordable bedaquiline in all markets. Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Philippe Duneton
Executive Director
Unitaid

cc Ms. Anna Carvaggio,
Managing Director & Vice President,
Johnson & Johnson