SUMMARY SHEET		
AGENDA NR. 1.10- 10.0	SUBJECT	**DRUG STOCK OUTS**
FOR INFORMATION X	FOR DISCUSSION X	FOR DECISION X

RATIONALE: Despite important progress made by the Stop TB Partnership to secure resources and mechanisms for high-quality anti-TB drugs over the past decade, drug stock outs continue to occur and the issue warrants careful attention and consideration as to how to improve the situation.

SUMMARY:

As a technical assistance agency, The Union observes firsthand the challenges programs face in ensuring an adequate supply of quality-assured anti-TB drugs at all levels. Recent reports from the WHO (WHO Global Tuberculosis Control Report 2009) indicate that, based on limited and less than timely data, drug stock outs continue to occur in many countries to various degrees at different levels. The Union has also recently observed drug stock outs of significant nature in several countries. The following two examples highlight the issue, as well as The Union's response in these specific examples.

1. Democratic Republic of Congo – January 2010

*Technical visit of January-February 2010 revealed complete stock out of RH in several health centres that had been occurring for over two months. As a result, health staff was modifying the first-line treatment regimen to prevent interruptions in treatment (use of RHE in continuation phase).
*Multiple potential causes identified, including poor budget forecast within GFATM grant in relation to actual drug costs.
*Union response included recommendations to Minister of Health and NTP regarding future financing and drug management, communication with partners, including GDF and GFATM portfolio manager and securing resources through Union TB CAP budget for drug supply transportation within country.

2. Zimbabwe – Various periods 2009

*Several technical visits during 2009 revealed stock outs at various levels, unbalanced drug supply in health centres and many expired drugs.
*Multiple causes were identified including lack of proper drug supply requisitions, lack of supervision and lack of transportation.
*Union response included recommendations to NTP regarding drug management, communication with partners, including JSI (responsible for supply chain support in country) and securing resources through Union TB CAP budget for enhanced program supervision.

The increasing recognition of sub-optimal drug supply was also evident at a recent Global Alliance-Gates-sponsored meeting in New York on March 31 where several Stop TB Partners met to discuss various TB drug issues, including the problem of stock outs.

The Union believes this is an issue with collective responsibility of all partners to address as a priority TB control issue. Some challenges and responses to consider include:

Challenges:
*Reliance on external (and often single) donor for drug supply support
*HR capacity/limitations at programme level to adequately address drug management
*Reluctance of programmes to flag drug shortages until too late
*Failure of partners to follow up after crisis situations are resovled

Responses:
*who should be notified and by what mechanism for any pending stock out?
*what immediate actions can be taken to address imminent/occurring stock outs?
*what analysis or debrief can be expected after such occurrences and who takes the responsibility to conduct and share these analyses?
*what global overview of the problem, identification of common factors and mechanisms to prevent this problem should be conducted?

DECISIONS REQUESTED (FROM STOP TB COORDINATING BOARD):

- What is the role of various partners in addressing this issue?
- Who can address some of the items for consideration above?
- How does the Board feel that concerns with the drug supply problem should be balanced with recognition of advances made in this area by the Partnership

IMPLICATIONS (POLITICAL / FINANCIAL / STAFFING, ETC):

- Increasingly this will be an area of concern among affected communities – failure to acknowledge this as a serious issue and take steps to address it could be seen as weakness of the Partnership
- Financial and staffing implications depend on the role of the Secretariat/Working Groups in addressing or responding to the issue

NEXT STEPS

ACTION REQUIRED: Discussion and response to the issues raised to prevent stock outs in the future

FOCAL POINT: Tom Moore, GDF

TIMEFRAME: 2010