



For Immediate Release

CONTACT:

Kasia Reterska

+ 1 917 554 1196

Kasia.Reterska@edelman.com

Leading global health experts unite behind a global call for action on lung disease

2010: The Year of the Lung Kicks Off

Cancun, Mexico, 6 December 2009 —The Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS), convening at the 40th anniversary International Union Against TB and Lung Disease World Conference in Cancun, Mexico, today unanimously declared that 2010 will be the Year of the Lung.

As hundreds of millions of people around the world are suffering each year from a variety of respiratory disease, like Tuberculosis, pneumonia, asthma, influenza and other diseases, a common lung health strategy has long been missing from the global political and social agenda. The *2010: The Year of the Lung* will be an intensive global 12 month campaign spearheaded by seven major respiratory societies and aimed at galvanizing health officials and civil society behind one common purpose: to express the urgency for increased awareness and action to promote lung health to all levels of society. *2010: The Year of the Lung* aims to drive legislative, political and grassroots public opinion towards measurable improvements in funding, research and development, basic lung health screening, smoking cessation and public education of lung function and care.

“The convergence of the leading respiratory, pulmonary and public health experts and their commitment to tackle the issues of lung-related disease through this unified campaign is extremely encouraging,” said Dr. Bertel Squire, president of the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease. “Our campaign underscores the tremendous efforts by FIRS and our colleague organizations to stand together and raise awareness about the deep impact and implications of lung ailments for so many—particularly the poor—around the world.”

More than 2,000 delegates from over 160 countries convened at the Union World Conference on Lung Health to express concern about the gravity and pervasive nature that lung disease presents to so many facets of society and their impact on socio-economic development particularly in poor country contexts.



The *2010: The Year of the Lung* campaign directs its partner organizations to:

- Offer widespread support to the more than 160 nations that have ratified the first-ever international public health treaty – the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control – and call upon the remaining countries to do so;
- Demand increased research funding to develop tools and treatments ranging from new diagnostics to new vaccines and medicines from their governments;
- Strengthen health systems and work towards the fair and equitable distribution of these health care resources to all who need them;
- Lobby for improved legislation protecting the quality of the air we all breathe;
- Ensure that every health worker, parent, child, teacher, employer, religious leader, community leader, media representative and government official understands the risks and symptoms of lung diseases and how to keep lungs healthy, because lung health is essential to breath and life

“Launching the *2010: The Year of the Lung* campaign at this particularly momentous moment—T B cases continue to rise, H1N1 pandemic, the rising death total that pneumonia takes on children—both inspires and enhances the incredible work already being done to address the important issues of lung health, while also mobilizing a new charge and challenge ahead within the global health community and beyond,” said Nikolaos M. Siafakas, president of the European Respiratory Society.

ABOUT 2010: THE YEAR OF THE LUNG

2010: THE YEAR OF THE LUNG IS A MULTIFACETED CAMPAIGN THAT AIMS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LUNG HEALTH, GENERATE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR PREVENTING AND TREATING LUNG DISEASE AND ENCOURAGING INCREASED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING FOR LUNG DISEASE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. THE CAMPAIGN WAS CONVENED BY A COALITION OF LUNG HEALTH ADVOCATES WHO RECOGNIZE THAT THE LUNGS HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED TOO LONG IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON *2010: THE YEAR OF THE LUNG*, PLEASE VISIT WWW.2010YEAROFTHELUNG.ORG.