



# **Annual Report 2009**

**SAARC Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)  
Nepal**



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# PREFACE

This Annual Report is a summary of activities carried out by SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) during the period of January to December 2009. It is my pleasure to inform that STAC has completed most of the assigned responsibilities for the year 2009. I would like to thank Programme Managers of National TB Control Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of SAARC Member States for their generous cooperation, guidance and support for implementation of activities of STAC.



I believe that the activities performed by SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre have provided support to National Tuberculosis Control Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of SAARC Member States in the implementation of TB & HIV/AIDS prevention & control activities.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General of SAARC, and Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC Secretariat for their generous support, guidance and full cooperation to carry out all activities effectively. I would like to thank WHO/SEARO for providing technical support for some of the activities of the Centre.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Governments of SAARC Member States for their cooperation and support for successful organization of STAC activities, such as Partnership Programmes, Trainings, Workshops, Meetings, Seminars etc. on different aspects of TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC Region.

We are committed in our endeavour to provide support to SAARC Member States for prevention and control of TB & HIV/AIDS in SAARC Region

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kashi Kant Jha', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha  
Director  
SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre/National TB Control Programme, Nepal

# SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)

## Introduction

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) is one of the Regional Centres of SAARC which works for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National TB Control Programmes (NTPs) and National AIDS Control Programmes (NACPs) of SAARC Member States.

The Centre has a Governing Board comprising of 11 Members. The Governing Board consists of one representative from each Member State, a representative from SAARC Secretariat, a representative from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal and Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre who serves as Member Secretary.

## Eighteenth Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC

The Eighteenth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre was held from 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The Governing Board reviewed the achievements of the Centre & budget for the year 2008 & 2009 and discussed Programme activities and budget (Institutional & Programme cost) for the year 2009 submitted by the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and recommended for the approval through Standing Committee.

## Recommended Programmes for 2009

1. Public Awareness and Advocacy Programme on TB and HIV/ AIDS
  - i. World TB Day
  - ii. World AIDS Day
  - iii. SAARC Charter Day
  - iv. Partnership Programme with and NGOs & Medical College in Nepal
  - v. Awareness and advocacy material -Brochures etc. on the occasion of World TB Day and World AIDS Day 2009
2. Participation in International/Regional Meetings, Seminars, Conferences in the field of TB and HIV/AIDS by Director and Professionals of STAC.
  - i. Participation in the 40th Union World Conference on Lung Health, Mexico.
  - ii. Participation in the International AIDS Conference
  - iii. Participation in Meeting of Collaboration Institutions- WHO/UNAIDS
  - iv. Participation in NTP/HIV-AIDS Review in Member States
3. Production of STAC Publications
  - i. STAC Newsletters ( by including News/information/reports of World TB Day, World AIDS Day of member States)- 2 issues
  - ii. SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS- 2 issues
  - iii. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Report (Update) on Tuberculosis-2009
  - iv. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Report (Update) on HIV/AIDS including TB/HIV Co-infection-2009
  - v. Annual Report of STAC-2008

- vi. Technical Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Sputum Smear Microscopy
- vii. SAARC Training Module for Quality Assurance of Sputum Smear Microscopy
- viii. Revision and print of "SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre at a Glance"
- ix. Wall Calendar for 2010

4. Distribution of STAC Publications.
5. Services of Professional Editor/s from Nepal as and when necessary.
6. Review of Articles of SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS.
7. Constitution and expansion Pool of experts from the Region in the field of TB, HIV/AIDS and Laboratories.
8. Engagement of Service of Professional microbiologist from the region for in house training of Laboratory staff of STAC at the Centre.
9. Engagement of Service of Expert - Epidemiologist from the region for in house training/discussion for collection and analysis and management of data.
10. Strengthening of STAC library.
11. Dissemination of information of TB & HIV/AIDS by updating STAC Website, internet connectivity and Hiring a consultant for upgrading STAC Website.
12. Sixth Round External Proficiency testing in Reference Laboratory.
13. Procurement of chemical and other lab materials for regular works at SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS reference laboratory of STAC.
14. The Meeting of the Programme Managers of the National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of the Member States, Maldives.
15. SAARC Regional Training for Programme Managers on DOTS Plus (MDR-TB), Pakistan.
16. SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologist for sputum Culture/sensitivity in collaboration with NTI, Bangalore, India.
17. SAARC Regional Workshop to revise SAARC Regional Strategy on TB/HIV Co-infection, Bhutan.
18. SAARC Regional Training on counseling, testing, care and support and ART, Nepal.
19. SAARC Training on Leadership and Management Skills at National/Regional level, Bangladesh.
20. SAARC Regional Training for Operational Research, India.
21. Situation Analysis of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Activities in Afghanistan by STAC officials.
22. SAARC Regional Training on Data Management, Sri Lanka.
23. Conferment of SAARC Award on TB and HIV/AIDS.
24. SAARC Goodwill Ambassador's Programme.

### ***Research Activities***

24. A study to determine the Constraints in involvement of Private practitioners in Sri Lanka.
25. Baseline CD4 counts in the adult population in Pakistan.
26. Estimation of under/over diagnosis of the sputum negative & extra pulmonary TB cases in TB/HIV Co-infection in resource limited settings in National Tuberculosis Institute, India.
27. Study on culture positivity amongst smear negative patients.

## Nineteenth Meeting of the Governing Board

Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was held from 28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009 in Kathmandu. Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre extended a warm welcome to the participants in the meeting and delivered his the welcome address. Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, Social Division, SAARC Secretariat delivered his remarks. Dr. B. B. Rewari, Chairman, Governing Board, STAC delivered opening remarks. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC extended vote of thanks.



The meeting was attended by **Dr. Syed Umar Khyyam**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh, **Dr. Ugen Dophu**, Director, JDWNRH, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan, **Dr. B. B. Rewari**, National Programme Officer (ART), NACO, New Delhi, India, **Dr. Pushpa Malla**, Director, National Tuberculosis Centre, Government of Nepal, **Mr. Krishna Chandra Aryal**, Section Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal, **Mr. Muhammad Hassan Wazir**, Director (SAARC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, **Dr. A. K. Sunil B. De Alwis**, Director, NPTCCD, Government of Sri Lanka, **Mr. Hassan Shifau**, Director, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu and **Dr. Kashi Kant Jha**, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Bhaktapur, Nepal.

The Board discussed Programme activities and budget (Institutional & Programme cost) for the year 2010 submitted by the STAC and recommended for the approval through the Programming & Standing Committees.

### The Board recommended the following Programmes for the year 2010:

1. SAARC Training of Trainers on Management of DOTS-plus for National, Provincial & District level Managers of National Tuberculosis Programme, Afghanistan.
2. SAARC Training of Trainers of Programme Managers on DOTS-plus for National, Provincial & District level Managers of National Tuberculosis Programme, Bangladesh.
3. SAARC Training of Trainer's on Leadership & Strategic Management for National, Provincial & District level Managers of National Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Bhutan.
4. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers (Microbiologists) on Culture & DST of Mycobacterium Tuberculosis in India.
5. SAARC Regional Workshop for development of regionally relevant Research Protocols on Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS for SAARC Member States in India.
6. SAARC Training of Trainer's on Leadership & Strategic Management for National, Provincial & District level Managers of National Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Nepal.
7. SAARC Training of Trainers on Leadership & Strategic Management for National, Provincial & District level Managers of National Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Maldives.
8. STAC's Regional TB & HIV/AIDS Research Presentation & Dissemination of findings in International Conferences.



9. SAARC Training of Trainers on Counseling, Care, Support and Treatment for National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Pakistan.
10. SAARC Meeting of National TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programme Managers and Mechanism to tackle Cross Border collaboration in Sri Lanka.
11. Meetings with Strengthening Networking with Collaborating Institutions- WHO / UNAIDS / UNFPA / NTI / TRC / Green Light Committee/DOTS Plus Committee & other collaborating Institutes.
12. Providing Technical Assistance to NTP & HIV/AIDS Programme and participation in Review of Programme of SAARC Member States.
13. Strengthening/ Capacity Building of SAARC Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Center's Officials by attending Regional Workshops/Seminars/Trainings.

### **Regular Activities**

14. Public Awareness and Advocacy Programme on TB and HIV/ AIDS-Commemoration/Celebration of:
  - i. World TB Day,
  - ii. World AIDS Day and
  - iii. SAARC Charter Day
15. Preparation and publication of Awareness and advocacy materials on the occasion of World TB Day, World AIDS Day and SAARC Charter Day.
16. Two Partnership Programme with NGOs / Industry / Medical College / School / Pharmacists / Media / Travel Agencies / Manpower Agencies in Nepal.
17. Printing of STAC Publications
  - i. STAC Newsletters ( by including News/information/reports of World TB Day, World AIDS Day of member States)-2 issues
  - ii. SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS - 2 issues
  - iii. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Reports (Updates) on Tuberculosis - 2010
  - iv. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Reports (Updates) on HIV/AIDS including TB/HIV Co-infection-2010
  - v. Annual Report of STAC-2009
  - vi. Print Report of Round V Proficiency Testing
  - vii. Wall Calendar/Diary for 2011
18. Distribution of STAC Publications, related documents and other materials.
19. Review of Articles of SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS.
20. Strengthening of STAC library.
  - i. Purchase / subscription of books and journals
  - ii. Library upgrading, Books/journals binding/others
  - iii. Library upgrading with Audio Visual Material
21. Dissemination of information of TB & HIV/AIDS by updating STAC Website
22. Procurement of chemicals and other lab materials for regular works at SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Reference Laboratory at STAC
23. SAARC Goodwill Ambassadors for HIV/AIDS Programme
24. Conferment of SAARC Award on TB and HIV/AIDS (TB or HIV/AIDS)

### **Research Activities**

25. Drug Sensitivity Study (DST) of patients failing among CAT I treatment in collaboration with NTI, Bangalore, India
26. HIV prevalence among MDR-TB patients in Bangladesh
27. Pharmacovigilance Study on FDC's (Anti TB drugs) in Sri-Lanka
29. Survey for Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in TB/HIV co-infected patients in high HIV settings in India

# Reports on Activities Carried out and Achievements of the Centre in 2009

## 1. Public Awareness and Partnership Programmes on TB and HIV/AIDS

### Commemoration of World TB Day/SAARC TB Day, World AIDS Day and Celebration of SAARC Charter Day

#### World TB Day 2009

##### 1.1. Partnership Programme with School Teachers



Rising awareness through partnership programmes is one of the strategies of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) for the control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the community. The Centre considers that community participation is a very crucial factor for creating awareness to unveil the hidden problems of TB and HIV/AIDS due to stigma & discrimination. The Centre is doing its best to gather people on a platform and request them to support and cooperate for elimination of stigmatization & discrimination prevailing in the society towards TB and HIV/AIDS.

STAC commemorated the World TB Day with the slogan “**I Am Stopping TB**” by organizing a Partnership Programme with Teachers for Awareness under “**Advocacy & Awareness Programme with School Teachers on TB & HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control**” on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal. About 100 teachers from 50 schools participated in the programme.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC extended welcome to the participants and highlighted “the Role of Teachers for the control of TB in General Public” and also explained the influential role of teachers and schools in mobilizing public support, influence on policy makers and reducing social stigma.

He thanked the participants for the cooperation rendered by the schools and teachers for creating awareness pertaining to TB and HIV/AIDS.

The Programme was also attended and addressed by Dr. Pushpa Malla, Director, National TB Centre, Government of Nepal, Mr. Jaya Bahadru Karki, District Public Health Officer, Bhaktapur district, Mr. Prakash Subedi, Section Officer, District Education Office, Lalitpur district, Government of Nepal, Mr. Madanji Mainali, Nepal Anti TB Association, Kathmandu, Nepal and Mr. Tejeshwor Gonga, Principal, Jaycees Secondary School, Bhaktapur, Nepal.

#### Outcome

- Participants were clarified about different issues in relation to TB and HIV/AIDS.

- Teachers group committed to provide co-ordination and cooperation for the provision of updated information regarding TB and HIV/AIDS to students and general public.
- Participants acquainted with role of teachers for the control of TB and HIV/AIDS

### Green Badge Campaign

STAC launched the “Green Badge Campaign” on the occasion of World TB Day 2009. Through this campaign STAC envisages to develop a work force of the motivated persons from the general public. The volunteers from the general public will be sensitized by imparting knowledge on TB, its situation and the strategy to control it and they will be enrolled as Green Badge workforce. The Green Badge holders will take the responsibility of improving awareness of the general public on Tuberculosis and provide them information on the availability of services in public / private / voluntary sector. They will help in improvement of community participation and reducing stigma & discrimination associated with Tuberculosis.



### Participation in World TB Day functions

#### Participation in Lok Dohori

On the occasion of World TB Day 2009, Ministry of Health and Population, National TB Centre organized a Lok Dohori (Duet Folk Song) Programme at Basantapur Dabali, Kathmandu on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Dr. K. K. Jha, Director and other staff of the STAC participated in the Programme. A group of famous folk singers sang folk songs related with TB, its symptoms, treatment and available facilities in the country. The objective of the Programme was to enhance public awareness on TB. Dr. Govinda Prasad Ojha, Director General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal inaugurated the function as Chief Guest.

#### Press Conference

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC attended the Press Conference with media partners of Nepal, organized as a special event to commemorate World TB day by NTC in Ministry of Health & Population on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009.

#### Joint Function

The World Tuberculosis Day is commemorated every year on 24<sup>th</sup> March, when German bacteriologist, Dr. Robert Koch in 1882, announced the discovery of tuberculosis bacilli, the bacteria that causes tuberculosis. 24<sup>th</sup> March was announced to be commemorated as World TB Day by WHO and IUATLD in 1982. The day is also called as SAARC TB Day.

On occasion of the **Day**, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Center performed different activities in collaboration with National TB Control



Programme, Nepal. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009, the main function was organized at **Nepal Academy Hall** Kathmandu. Hon'ble Mr. Girirajmani Pokharel, Minister for Health & Population, Government of Nepal graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The Programme was chaired by Dr. D. S. Bam, Secretary (Health), Ministry of Health & Population, Government of Nepal. The Programme was attended by Dr. Sudha Sharma, Secretary (Population), Ministry of Health and Population and large number of National and International dignitaries and community leaders, social workers, health care providers, students / teachers and general public.

On this occasion publications of STAC: **Annual Report 2008 and History of Tuberculosis in SAARC Region – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**, were released by Hon'ble Minister of Health & Population, Government of Nepal.

Dr Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC presented the Vote of Thanks.

### **Exhibition**

Information about STAC and its activities for TB and HIV/AIDS control in Member States was developed and displayed in exhibition organized at the open space of the entrance of main function.

### **Publication of Message**

On this occasion, the STAC published a special message of His Excellency Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC in the National Newspapers.

### **Newspaper Article: "TB or not TB"**

A newspaper article "TB or not TB" written on HIV/TB co-infection was published in the Kathmandu Post newspaper on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

### **Display of Banners**

Banners explaining information related to TB, its symptoms, causes, prevention treatment etc. were displayed at prominent places in the city.

## **Commemoration of World TB Day 2009 in Member States**

### **AFGHANISTAN**

March 24 marked as World TB Day 2009, an important opportunity to raise awareness about the global fight against tuberculosis (TB). Tuberculosis is a major public health problem in Afghanistan too with

approximately 30,000 new cases per year. Almost 70% of reported cases of Afghanistan were women, and without proper treatment, far too many Afghan citizens succumb to the disease.



School girls in Jawzjan Province hold signs that read I am stopping TB

To increase understanding about TB prevention and treatment, USAID, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and other members of the international Stop TB Partnership held events in schools across Afghanistan. About 152,000 students took part in the day's celebrations, participating in quiz shows,



local marches, and sessions with community health workers. They also received baseball caps and flags featuring the Stop TB Partnership slogan, *I am stopping TB*. Throughout the country, 6.2 million children learned how to prevent the spread of TB through print materials and mass media messages.

## BHUTAN

### Message from Lyonpo Zangley Dukpa, Minister of Health

*“Together we can move mountains; together we can eliminate TB”*



Hon'ble Minister has given message on the occasion of World TB Day 2009. Giving emphasis on the theme of the day the Hon'ble Minister stated that each and everyone can play a significant role in stopping this deadly but curable disease. He briefed the global burden of the disease. He further added in his message that the socio-economic implication of the disease and its control in the country. He also pointed out that problem of MDR TB, XDR TB as well as TB HIV co-infection. He expressed his satisfaction on improvement of death rate of PTB, that it has declined from

5% to 2% and more than 90% cured in Bhutan. He reiterated the commitment of government of Bhutan with its development partners in combating the disease and each of us, as a member of the community, shall do our part to advocate and help prevent and cure tuberculosis.

Hon'ble Minister of Health, Mr. Lyonpo Zangley Dukpa graced the occasion as the Chief Guest at the event organized to observe the World TB Day on 24<sup>th</sup> March at Motithang Higher Secondary School with the theme: “We simply must stop TB”. Guests and invitees from UN agencies, financial institutions, corporations, business communities, students and teachers from Higher Secondary Schools of Thimphu Thromdue, representatives from armed forces and their families, monks and nuns from monasteries gathered to observe the day. There were more than 600 people who gathered in the hall to mark the day. After the arrival of the Chief Guest, Marchang ceremony was held followed by welcome speech by Dr. Ugen Dophu, Director, Department of Public Health. He stated that TB still remains one of the major public health problems across the globe and in Bhutan. Representatives of MHSS, Monk and Indigenous drungtsho gave their commitments in fight against TB. WHO Representative for Bhutan read out message of SEAR, Director for 2009 World TB Day. In his concluding remarks, he said that, Bhutan is doing fairly well in terms of TB control and continued support from WHO will be made available.

The Hon'ble Minister of Health expressed his gratitude for inviting him in this remarkable occasion. In his address he said that although TB is a curable disease by medicines, but many deaths are occurring due to TB worldwide. He informed that TB in Bhutan is still a public health problem and approximately 1000 cases of all forms of TB are reported annually. He informed that after use of DOTS the death rate has declined from 5% to 2%. He also pointed out about the problem created by HIV TB co-infection among PLHA.

Leaflets and facts about TB were displayed. The students of MHSS also prepared posters and messages about TB and were displayed on the board for public to see.

## NEPAL



Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, National Tuberculosis Centre commemorated World TB Day 2009 by organizing various activities on different dates at different places of the country.

### Organization of Lok Dohori

On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Ministry of Health and Population, National TB Centre (NTC) organized a Lok Dohori (Duet Song) Programme at Basantapur Dabali, in Kathmandu Durbar Square. A group of

famous folk singers sang folk songs related with TB, its symptoms, treatment and available facilities in the country. The objective of the Programme was to enhance public awareness on TB.

### Press Conference

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 National TB Centre organized a Press Conference with Media Partners of Nepal at Ministry of Health and Population, Ramshah Path, Kathmandu. The objective of the conference was to inform the media regarding the activity of the Government towards the control of TB as well present status and Programme activities in the country.

### Joint Function

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population, National TB Control Programme (NTP) Nepal organized a function jointly with SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Nepal Anti-TB Association, World Health Organization and different development partners at Nepal Academy Hall, Kathmandu.

### Release of Publications

Annual Reports and other publications of National TB Centre and SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre were released by the Chief Guest during the Programme.

### Declaration of Goodwill Ambassadors

During the Programme, Goodwill Ambassadors for National TB Programme, Nepal were declared. This socially honored title was awarded to Ms. Deepa Shree Niraula and Mr. Deepak Raj Giri, well known artists.

### Exhibition

Chief Guest, National and International dignitaries and general public observed the exhibitions arranged by National TB Centre, Nepal SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre, and other different organizations.

## Publication of Messages

National Daily Newspaper “Gorkhapatra” published the messages of following National and International dignitaries on the occasion of commemoration of World TB Day 2009:

- Mr. Girirajmani Pokharel, Hon’ble Minister for Health and Population, Government of Nepal.
- His Excellency Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC.
- Dr. D. S. Bam, Secretary for Health, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal.
- Dr. Govinda Prasad Ojha, Director General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal.
- Dr. Pushpa Malla, Director, National TB Centre, Government of Nepal.

## PAKISTAN

Every year National TB Control Programme (NTP), Pakistan implements a number of activities to commemorate World TB Day. This year NTP implemented a special campaign the “**One Voice**” campaign focused on branding and increased demand creation for TB information, products and services throughout Nation.

The regional theme of this year’s World TB Day was “**Engaging Youth**” through Million Youth March. NTP engaged more than 500,000 school children and youth in various Stop TB activities during the month of March throughout the country. In order to develop a national plan to implement special activities to commemorate World TB Day, series of consultative meetings with different partners were organized.



Inauguration of Poster Exhibition on TB by Federal Minister for Health in Islamabad National Arts gallery

## Activities at National Level

### Message from the Honorable Prime Minister for Pakistani Youth

A targeted message from the Hon’ble Prime Minister for young people was developed by NTP which was read in the school assemblies on 11<sup>th</sup> March in public schools throughout the country.

### National Poster & Essay Competitions

National level poster & essay competitions were announced in the leading newspapers for the young people. The theme of “Ao Mil Ker Rokian TB Ko” was given for essay competition. Where as for poster competition four different themes were provided including “I am Stopping TB”, “TB & Youth”, TB & Poverty”, “Cure TB to Stop TB” were given.

### Production & Dissemination of ACSM Resource Material

ACSM resource and promotional material for World TB Day was also developed. This included posters, t-shirts and caps. These were provided to partners for distribution among the school children and youth during World TB Day activities.



## **Advocacy Event with Youth & Key Stakeholders**

Hon'ble Minister for Health Mir Ijaz Hussain Jakharani, graced the occasion as chief guest in an advocacy event with youth and key stakeholders organized on March 18, 2009 at National Arts Gallery, Islamabad in order to commemorate World TB Day 2009. Honourable Minister for Health in his remarks said that Tuberculosis is a public health problem that requires sustained and concerted efforts and World TB Day provides an opportunity to every one to play their role in stopping TB at every level. He remarked that youth are the future of our country and can play a pivotal role in the fight against TB. He further said that despite that Pakistan has achieved more than 70% TB detection and treatment success of more than 80% of TB patients in the country; however, we have to go a long way ahead. TB is not just a medical problem; it is also a socio economic issue that requires diligent management of micro and macro socioeconomic issues in the country. The Government has ensured free supply of TB medicines for the next 5 years. The minister also distributed shields and certificates among the volunteers and NTP partners to acknowledge their efforts.

The Secretary Health Mr. Khushnood Akhtar Lashari, WHO Representative Dr. Khalife Bille, National Programme Manager NTP, Dr. Noor Ahmad Baloch, and literary famous Mr. Amjad Islam Amjad were also presented in the event.

The Honourable Minister for Health inaugurated the poster exhibition. The top 20 posters were received from different parts of the country for exhibition.

Dr. Noor Ahmad Baloch, NPM, NTP delivered welcome remarks. He acknowledged the efforts and contributions of young volunteers from various organizations and also thanked media for their support and Mr. Amjad Islam Amjad, Mr. Abrar ul Haq, Mr. Jawad Ahmed, Mr. Amanat Ali Khan and Mr. Tariq Tafoo for developing song on TB. He paid gratitude to all PTP managers and coordinators, Global Fund and non Global Fund partners, bilateral and multi-lateral organizations and NTP team for making World TB Day a success.

Dr. Khalife Bile, WHO Representative delivered his address. He appreciated the efforts of NTP on organizing a youth specific event and on engaging more than 500,000 children and young people throughout the country to mark World TB Day.

## **Quiz Competition**

A quiz competition among girl guides and boy scouts was also part of the event.

## **Launch of TB Song "Aao Irada Karain"**

The event packaged numerous activities including the launch of TB song "Aao Irada Karain, Mil Key Yeh Wada Karain", written by Mr. Amjad Islam Amjad and sung by a group of eminent artists including Jawad Ahmed, Amanat Ali Khan, Shabnam Majeed and Tariq Tafoo.

## **City Branding**

All major cities of the country were branded with streamers, banners and billboards containing messages of TB control, role of youth in this regard and messages clarifying myths attached with the disease. The issue of stigma was also highlighted.

## **Sharing of Activities at National & International Level**

The activities carried out during World TB Day were shared with EMRO and other national and international key stakeholders.

## Way Forward

Keeping in view the meaningful participation of young volunteers during World TB Day 2009, motivated ACSM, and NTP to develop a critical mass of young volunteers and utilize them for TB services. NTP therefore foresees for structured national volunteer Programme with defined policies and procedures. Once the Programme is established, young volunteers from all over the country will be registered with NTP's volunteers Programme "TB Sey Nijat Naujawano Key Sath". NTP is in a process of collaborating and coordinating with the already established structured volunteer organizations in order to learn from their experiences and build its capacity in this regard. The main objective of this collaboration is to utilize these organizations and volunteers potentially for TB services.

## Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2009

### Awareness Programme for Female Community Volunteers

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) commemorated the World AIDS Day 2009 with the theme – "Universal Access & Human Rights" by organizing an "Awareness Programme on HIV/AIDS & TB for Female Community Volunteers" on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at Bhaktapur, Nepal. The objective of the Programme was to enhance the awareness on important aspects of HIV/AIDS and TB among Female Community Volunteers.

Ms. Meera Sherchan, Women Development Officer, Government of Nepal chaired the function. Mr. Mukund Ranjit, Programme Officer, District Development Committee, Government of Nepal, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC Secretariat graced the Programme as Guest of Honour.

Mr. Jaya Bahadur Karki, District Health Officer, Government of Nepal, welcomed the participants.



Participants were acquainted with the existing problems of HIV/AIDS, and TB in the community as well as their preventive strategies. Experts from STAC explained the gravity and magnitude of problem and the preventive strategies applied to combat the diseases.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC extended a warm welcome to the participants and guests in the Programme. He highlighted the Role of Female Community Volunteers in HIV/AIDS prevention and Control.

Mr. Mahendra Kayastha, Nepal Anti- TB Association (NATA), Bhaktapur Branch, highlighted the efforts made by NATA for control of Tuberculosis.

Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC Secretariat delivered his experiences of Estonia and other African countries regarding the situation of HIV/AIDS and its negative impact on social structure as well as on development of the country. He appealed to the participants to unite together to combat HIV/AIDS and save the Nation as well as Region.

An interaction session was also held. Sixty community volunteers attended the Programme. Special brochure on HIV/AIDS and TB was published in Nepali language and distributed to the participants.

## Commemoration of World AIDS Day in SAARC Member States

World AIDS Day 2009 has been commemorated in SAARC Member States by organizing different activities for spreading of messages to create awareness in the community on prevention and control of HIV/AIDS.

### Celebration of 25<sup>th</sup> SAARC Charter Day, 2009

#### Awareness Programme for School Students, Teachers & Media on SAARC, TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control



8<sup>th</sup> December is the Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This day is a very special day for the SAARC. SAARC is a manifestation of the determination of the people of South Asia to work together towards finding solutions to their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding and to create an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits. The SAARC was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the Heads of State or Government of Seven Countries. Now eight Member States are there in SAARC.

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), in collaboration with the SAARC Information Centre (SIC) celebrated 25<sup>th</sup> SAARC Charter Day on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009 in Kathmandu. On the occasion, an **Awareness Programme for School Students, Teachers & Media on SAARC, TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control** was held at the premises of SIC.

The Objective of the Programme was to enhance the awareness on important aspects of SAARC, HIV/AIDS and TB among school students, teachers and media.

Mr. Shreedhar Gautam, Director, SIC welcomed the participants in the Programme. Mr. Azizuddin Ahmadzada, Director, SAARC Secretariat delivered his remarks on SAARC and its activities. Mr. Dharmendra Jha, President, Federation of Nepalese Journalist explained about the SAARC and Media. Dr. V.S. Salhotra, Deputy Director and Dr. Ganga C. Pathirana, Technical Officer (HIV/AIDS), STAC made their presentations on TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC region and general information on the two diseases.

Mr. Yadab Kant Silwal, Former Secretary - General, SAARC, who graced the Programme as Chief Guest shared his experiences with the participants. He thanked SIC and STAC for organizing very fruitful and appropriate Programme.

About hundred participants took part in the Programme.

Mr. Narayan Prasad Sharma, President, Nepal Press Council presided the Programme.

## 2. Visit of Ms. Shabana Azmi, SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS

Ms. Shabana Azmi, Indian Cine Star and Social Activist visited Nepal as SAARC Goodwill Ambassador from 5th to 7th January 2009. She was nominated as SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS, as per **SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS**. Mr. Sanath Jayasuriya, Sri Lankan Star Cricketer was also nominated along with Ms. Azmi as SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS.



The SAARC Goodwill Ambassador's Programme was conceived with the objective of facilitating the SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS and its work plan.

Ms. Azmi was welcomed by representatives from SAARC Secretariat, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and Indian Embassy at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu.

Ms. Azmi, during her visit mainly focused on importance of advocacy & awareness Programme to increase the understanding about HIV/AIDS and about available services for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS.

Ms. Azmi, made a courtesy visit with **Mr. Girirajmani Pokharel, Hon'ble Minister for Health & Population**, Nepal at Ministry of Health & Population, Kathmandu, on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Mr. Girirajmani Pokharel, Hon'ble Minister extended a warm welcome to Ms. Shabana Azmi. Discussion was held about the need for scale up of the ART services for eligible HIV infected persons and requirement of initiating Regional Project to tackle cross border issues on HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis. During interaction she expressed the need for improved Public Health Care infrastructure, improved accessibility of services for poor and marginalized sections of the Society especially women, multisectoral coordination and working at the grass root level.

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre in collaboration with SAARC Secretariat organized **Ms. Shabana Azmi's Press Conference with media** for advocacy on TB and HIV/AIDS Control at Hotel Yak & Yeti.

The Press conference started with welcome address by Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC. He highlighted the contribution made by Ms. Shabana Azmi on different aspects of social and public health issues in India, and her achievements of honor in different areas. Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC Secretariat described the importance of SAARC Goodwill Ambassadors Programme for HIV/AIDS Control.

In the press conference Ms. Azmi highlighted the role of advocacy through media to control HIV/AIDS and also explained that the stigma, discrimination and other social issues of HIV/AIDS could be mitigated by increasing awareness among general population.

The Press Conference was attended by more than 60 representatives of electronic and print media. There was a good interaction on prevalent issues and HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities.



After press Conference, she proceeded to **visit Ketaketi Ashram and AIDS Care Centre** being run by Nava Kiran Plus, an NGO belonging to the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS. She interacted with kids (HIV infected and otherwise) in Ketaketi Ashram. HIV infected and affected facilitators got good opportunity to share their problems and issues with Ms. Shabana Azmi.

Hon'ble Minister for Health & Population facilitated a meeting of **SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS with Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal**, Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister, Government of Nepal. During the meeting various issues related to Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in Nepal and in regional context were discussed.

Staff of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre and National Tuberculosis Centre also had an interaction meeting with Ms. Shabana Azmi at Hotel Yak and Yeti.

### 3. SAARC Regional Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for National/Regional level TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme Managers in Bangladesh



In accordance with the decision of the Eighteenth Governing Board Meeting of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, a five day Programme on “SAARC Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for National/Regional Level Managers in National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in Bangladesh” was organized by STAC with the coordination of National Tuberculosis Control Programme and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme of People’s Republic of Bangladesh. The Training Programme was held on **01<sup>st</sup> to 05<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 in Dhaka** with the objectives to improve the existing understanding, knowledge and skills on management and leadership among Programme Managers at National and Regional levels of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme and to scale-up and strengthen the National and Regional TB and HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities in Bangladesh.

**Prof. Dr. (Mrs.) Hosne Aara Tahmin**, Additional Director General, Department of Health Services, People’s Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest of the opening ceremony.

**Dr. Anowar Hossain Munshi**, the Joint Secretary (Public Health and WHO), Ministry of Health, People’s Republic of Bangladesh attended as the Special Guest of the opening ceremony.

**Dr. Kashi Kant Jha**, the Director, STAC delivered his remarks by thanking the People’s Republic of Bangladesh’s both National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes for facilitating the organization of the training Programme in Bangladesh successfully.

For this five day-training Programme twenty one Programme Managers at National and Regional levels of National TB Control Programme and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme in Bangladesh participated.

**Prof. (Dr.) Shah Monir Hossain**, Director General, Department of Health Services, People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest of the closing ceremony.

#### **Following Outcomes were achieved**

1. Strengthened liaison between STAC, and National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in Bangladesh.
2. Strengthened collaboration between National TB Control Programme and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme in Bangladesh.
3. Availability of a group of motivated Programme Managers equipped with improved managerial skills and leadership qualities at National and Regional levels of the National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme to achieve the time bound pledges; universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010, Millennium Development Goals and to scale-up the control activities further.

#### **4. SAARC Regional Training for Operational Research - Jaipur, India**

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu, Government of India and Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), Jaipur, India jointly organized SAARC Regional Training for Operational Research from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2009 in the premises of IIHMR.

The training Programme was specifically designed to enhance the participants' capacity in planning, designing and conducting operational research in TB and HIV/AIDS, and its utilization in improving Programme efficiency and effectiveness.



The Programme was inaugurated on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009 with the presence of Dr. O. P. Gupta, Director Health Services, Government of Rajasthan, India, as Chief Guest, Dr. K. N. Gupta, State TB Officer, Government of Rajasthan, India, as Special Guest, Dr. S.D. Gupta, Director, IIHMR, Jaipur, Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, the Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal, Dr. Prahlad Kumar, Director, National Tuberculosis Institute, Bangalore, India and Dr. Kedar Narsingh K.C., President, Nepal Medical Association Kathmandu, Nepal.

Dr. Anoop Khanna, Associate Professor, IIHMR, convened the opening ceremony as the Master of Ceremony. Dr. S.D. Gupta, Director, IIHMR extended welcome to the participants and dignitaries in the meeting.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC Chaired the Inaugural Session and delivered his remarks. He thanked RNTCP and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme (NACO) and IIHMR for facilitating to organize this training Programme in Jaipur, India. He explained problems on TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC region and emphasized the role of STAC in Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and TB in this region. He stressed the role and need of Operational Research in the TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes and necessity of capacity building in this regard.

The chief Guest & Special Guest also delivered their remarks.

Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC delivered vote of thanks.

The Programme was attended by the participants from NTPs and NACPs of SAARC Member States, Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The Programme was concluded by organizing a Closing Ceremony on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Dr. Akhilesh Bhargava, Director, SIHFW, Rajasthan graced the closing ceremony as Chief Guest along with Dr. L P Singh, Professor and Dean (Research), IIHMR, Jaipur, India.

## 5. SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologists on Sputum Culture and Drug Susceptibility Test, NTI, Bangalore, India



SAARCTB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu, National Tuberculosis Institute (NTI), Bangalore, India jointly organized SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologists for Sputum Culture and Drug Susceptibility Testing from 20<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009. The training was held in NTI training hall.

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC, inaugurated the Programme by lighting the traditional lamp.

Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC, Dr. K. M. Shiva Kumar,

Additional Director, NTI, Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran, WHO/SEARO, Delhi, Mr. Dhruva Kumar Khadka, Microbiologist, STAC and Dr. Prithish Vaidyanathan, NTI attended the Inaugural Programme.

Participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the Programme. Some observers from NTI also participated.

The Objectives of the Training were:

- To enhance the knowledge & skills of the Microbiologists in diagnosing & monitoring of the treatment efficacies of TB/MDR-TB and imparting trainings to health care providers and
- To improve the status of the NRLs to provide TB Culture and DST services and participate in DRS activities.

The training Programme was based on WHO/IUATLD Guidelines on Culture and Drug Susceptibility Testing (DST) Drug Resistance Surveillance (DRS) based on country specific DRS Protocol, NTI Training Curriculum for Culture and DST, PowerPoint presentations, observation of different sections of NRL, practical sessions, discussions, exercises and sharing of experiences.

Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran, WHO/SEARO, Mr. S. Anand, Consultant Microbiologist and Ms. Reena K. along with the other laboratory staff of NTI facilitated the training.

At the end of the training participants as well as facilitators gave their feed back and recommended some of the activities regarding laboratory training in coming years.

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC thanked Dr. P. Kumar, Director and all staff of NTI for their cooperation and support to organize the Programme effectively. He thanked Government of India for providing NTI as training venue to organize the Programme. He also thanked Member Countries of SAARC for sending participants for the Programme. Dr. Jha thanked WHO for providing invaluable support in this regard.

## 6. SAARC Regional Training on Data Management, Sri Lanka

As per the Programme schedule of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), a five day Regional Training on Data Management was jointly organized by STAC, Kathmandu and National Programme for TB Control and Chest Diseases (NPTCCD), Government of Sri Lanka in Colombo from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

The Objectives of the training were:

- To strengthen the skills of participants in data entry analysis using analytical software Programmes.
- To improve the knowledge and skills of participants in scientific data management.



Sixteen participants from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the training.

Dr. P. G. Mahipala, Deputy Director General of Health Services (Public Health Services), Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Sri Lanka graced the inaugural session as Chief Guest. Dr. A. K. S. B. Alwis, Programme Manager, National Programme for TB Control and Chest Diseases, Sri Lanka chaired the session. He welcomed the participants, officials of Government of Sri Lanka and staff of STAC, Kathmandu. Dr. V. S. Salhotra Deputy Director, STAC delivered the inaugural address as well as brief introduction about the importance of data management. Dr. Nimal Edirisinghe, Programme Manager, National HIV/AIDS & STD Control Programme, delivered his remarks. Dr. Mahipala, the Chief Guest of the session delivered his remarks and extended thanks to Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC and his team for the work carried out by the Centre for controlling and preventing TB and HIV/AIDS in the region

At the concluding of the training Programme Dr. V. S. Salhotra thanked the participants and expressed gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for support and cooperation. He thanked SAARC Member States for sending participants. He also thanked Prof. Anoop Khanna, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur, India and other resource persons for their support and cooperation.

The closing session was presided over by Dr. A. K. S. B. De Alwis, Programme Manager, NPTCCD, Government of Sri Lanka.

### Outcome

The participants have been successfully trained for proper use of application of computer software related with data management for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS. The training also strengthened and updated the skills to impart the training in their respective country which ensured the inputs towards the Programme in their country to improve the Programme activities.



## 7. Engagement of Services of Professional Microbiologist from the Region for In-house Training of Laboratory Staff of STAC at the Centre

With objective to train Laboratory Staff of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre on operation and management of laboratory for the purpose of upgrading it to the level of Supra National TB Reference Laboratory in the Region, Mr. S. Anand, Consultant Microbiologist, National TB Institute, Bangalore, India and Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran, TB Laboratory Focal Point, WHO, SEARO (from 06<sup>th</sup> -10 October 2009) visited SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre from 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

The team of Mr. Anand and Dr. Ramachandran trained the lab staff of the Centre on the basis of following points:

- Assessment of the physical infrastructure and equipments of the STAC Lab and assist in developing lab infrastructure in line with international guidelines.
- Assessment of TB culture and Drug Susceptibility practices and give support in areas which requires refinement and updates.
- Assist to update the laboratory manual and develop a standard operating procedures document for TB culture and Drug Susceptibility of first-line TB drugs.
- Review HR and assist to develop training plan (new and refresher) for Microbiologist and laboratory technicians for TB culture and drug susceptibility testing (first-line and second-line DST)
- Assistance for accreditation, planning and time lines.

The team started their job with brief introductory meeting with Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director and Mr. D. K. Khadka, Microbiologist.

The main agenda of the training was to give critical inputs for the layout of the new laboratory facility under construction. Accordingly the team visited new laboratory facility along with the architects and gave the necessary guidelines as per standard requirements for a mycobacteriology laboratory based on the internationally accepted bio-safety and infection control norms. Subsequently the team visited the existing laboratory at the National TB Centre situated in the same premises. The team also observed the laboratory procedures along with technical inputs for refinements and discussions on all aspects of TB culture and DST, bio-safety, infections control, quality issues and administrative aspects required for a fully functional laboratory. The team discussed with Dr. P. Malla, the then Director, NTC regarding the technical inputs to the laboratory.

On the final day, the team discussed with Director, Deputy Director and Microbiologist, STAC regarding the findings and decided that the laboratory Focal Point would prepare a final report. The team also presented some recommendations on National TB Centre laboratory & SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre's joint laboratory for culture and DST.

## 8. Situation Analysis of NTP and NACP in Afghanistan

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre carried out situation analysis of TB and HIV/AIDS control Programme including Laboratory activities in Kabul, Afghanistan to study the situation of prevention and control activities from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009.



The objectives of the activity were:

- To study the situation of prevention and control activities implemented by National TB and HIV/AIDS control Programme.
- To provide the recommendations to National TB and HIV/AIDS control Programme on the basis of the findings of the situation analysis conducted by the STAC.

The methodologies adopted to carry out the situation analysis were through discussion with NTP, NACP and Health Laboratory authorities, reviewing of available registers, reports, records and documents and observations during field visits.

A team of experts consisting Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, Mr. Dhruva Kumar Khadka, Microbiologist, Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Research Officer, Dr. Ganga C. Pathirana. Technical Officer (HIV/AIDS) from SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu performed the situation analysis in different aspects of TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes. The team visited Ministry of Health, National TB Control Programme Office, VCTC Kabul, Infectious Disease Hospital and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme Office in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The team expresses their thanks to the Managers of NTP and NACP for their full cooperation and support to carry out the situation analysis. On behalf of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, extended thanks to the National Managers and Officials of NTP and NACP including Laboratory unit of both Programmes for their hard work, full cooperation, warm hospitality, efficient management and unforgettable reception.

## Outcome

Availabilities of recommendations on the basis of the findings of the Situation Analysis of both, National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of Afghanistan.

## 9. Meeting of Programme Managers of NTP and NACP of SAARC Member States, Maldives

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes, Government of Maldives jointly organized the Meeting of the Managers of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 in Male, Maldives.



The **objectives** of the meeting were:

- To share the Programme achievements, experiences and innovations made by the Member States and learn from best practices.
- To identify of long term and short term regional activities of STAC according to the felt needs of the Region.
- To discuss, issues and challenges faced by the Member States in order to suggest possible solutions,
- To share the achievements and experiences of the Member States in TB/HIV collaboration.

### Opening Session

Mr. Abdul Baree Abdullah, Hon'ble Minister of State for Health, Government of Maldives graced the Programme as Guest of Honour and inaugurated the Programme. Dr. Ibrahim Yasir, Director General of Health Services graced as Chief Guest.

Mr. Abdul Hameed Hassan, Programme Manager for TB & HIV/AIDS, Government of Maldives delivered inaugural address and extended a warm welcome to all participants. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC highlighted about the meeting and gave introduction of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, its objectives and functioning towards prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS.

### Technical Session

Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC delivered the presentations on "Role of STAC in Prevention and Control of TB & HIV/AIDS and Global & Regional Situation of TB". Dr. Ganga C. Pathirana, Technical Officer (HIV/AIDS), STAC delivered the objective of the meeting and presented her presentation on "Global & Regional Situation of HIV/AIDS".

The following participants presented country presentations:

- Dr. Ataullah Zarabi, Head, ACMS, NTP, **Afghanistan**,
- Dr. Kuldeep Singh Sachdeva, CMO, NTP, **India**,
- Dr. D. Bachani, Deputy Director General, NACP, **India**,
- Ms. Fathima Reeza, Programme Officer, NTP, **Maldives**,
- Mr. Abdul Hameed, Programme Manager, TB & HIV/AIDS, **Maldives**,
- Dr. Sunil De Alwis, Programme Manager, NTP, **Sri Lanka** and
- Dr. Nimal Edirisinghe, Programme Manager, NACP, **Sri Lanka**.

The Programme was concluded with the presentation of General Recommendations as well recommendations on Cross border issues too.

### Outcome

The meeting developed recommendations on different issues, such as issues and problems for participation in STAC activities from Member States, establishment of regular coordination mechanism between TB and

HIV/AIDS Programme up gradation of STAC Regional TB Ref. Lab., supply of Annual Report from Member States to STAC on regular basis, established website linkages, exploring of possible funding for training and management, uniformity on MIS etc.

## **Recommendations**

1. It was discussed that participation of the Member States in the SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre's (STAC) activities are not optimum as the funding available with the National Programme for participation in the STAC activities is inadequate. It was recommended that the National TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of the respective SAARC Member States may keep the budget in their WHO Biennium for participation in regular STAC Programme/activities, e.g. Meeting of Programme Managers, Trainings on DOTS Plus and delivery of ART.
2. The Global Fund should establish a regular coordination mechanism with STAC as STAC is already supporting the National TB & HIV/AIDS Programme in various areas. The Global Fund Projects savings of the National Programme may be utilized for participation in the STAC Programmes/activities.
3. There is an urgent need for up-gradation of STAC Regional TB Reference Laboratory as second Supranational TB Reference Laboratory for the region to support the SAARC Member States. The National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) may also be utilized by the SAARC Member States as Supranational Reference Laboratory for the SAARC region for HIV/AIDS.
4. The SAARC Member States should send a copy of their Annual reporting formats on TB & HIV/AIDS which they submit to WHO and UNAIDS, to STAC by end of June of every year.
5. The STAC should explore the funding source from the Global Fund for Training of Trainers & Training on Programme Management.
6. Training on ART conducted by STAC should be oriented towards clinical management of cases apart from theoretical training and India's Centres of Excellence may be utilized for that purpose.
7. Having uniformity of MIS for the TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in the SAARC Member States may be explored in the next meeting of Programme Managers. Capacity building on Monitoring and Evaluation for the National HIV/AIDS Control Programme of the SAARC Member States may be organized in India with the support of National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), India.

## **10. Participation in International / Regional Meetings, Seminars, Conferences in the field of TB and HIV/AIDS by Director and Professionals of STAC**

### **10.1. Participation in Programme Committee Meeting**

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC attended 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee Meeting of SAARC held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2009

### **10.2. Participation in ANMECON**

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC attended All Nepal Medical Association Conference (ANMECON) organized by Nepal Medical Association in Kathmandu held from 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

### **10.3. Participation in Meeting of Collaboration Institutions WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA**

On the invitation of WHO/SEARO Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC participated in the "Regional Workshop on TB Surveillance and Programme Monitoring and Evaluation" held at

National TB Institute, Bangalore, India from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009 in the capacity of Temporary Advisor to the Regional Director.

#### **10.4. International AIDS Conference**

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC participated and presented research papers in the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of International AIDS Society (IAS), on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention which was held in Cape Town from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009. The following papers were presented:

- i. Community based risk behavior study on HIV/AIDS targeting women in Nepal (Poster),**  
by – *Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. V. S. Salhotra and Dr. A. P. Weerakoon* from SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre.
- ii. HIV epidemic in the SAARC region and regional efforts to contain it (e-paper)**  
by – *Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon and Dr. G. C. Pathirana* from STAC.
- iii. Identify the ways and means of collaboration between TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes to find out the challenges in implementation and suggest solutions in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Member States (Poster discussion)**  
by – *Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Dr. L. Shrestha, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon* from STAC and *Dr. S. Maroofi* from NTP Afghanistan, *Dr. M. A. A. Miah* from NTP Bangladesh, *Ms. S. Hussain* from NTP Maldives, *Dr. P. Malla* from NTP Nepal, *Dr. S. Hanif & Dr. E. Quadeer* from NTP Pakistan and *Dr. C. Sarukkali* from NPTCCD, Sri Lanka.

#### **10.5. Participation in Annual Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop**

Mr. D. K. Khadka participated as Facilitator in the Annual Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop organized by National TB Centre, Government of Nepal from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009 held in Nepal.

#### **10.6. Participation in Regional Workshop on Infection Control to Prevent Tuberculosis Transmission in Health Facilities**

Mr. D. K. Khadka, Microbiologist, STAC participated in Regional Workshop on Infection Control to Prevent TB Transmission in Health Facilities organized by WHO/SEARO in Kathmandu, Nepal from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2009.

#### **10.7. Participation in 40<sup>th</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health, Mexico**

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, participated in World Conference, organized by International Union against TB and Lung Disease (IUATLD) the UNION. The conference was held in Cancun, Mexico from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Dr. Jha presented the following papers:

- i. The progress of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre –**  
by - *Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon, Dr. L. Shrestha, and Mr. D. Khadka* from SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre
- ii. The Situation of MDR TB in SAARC Region and Regional Efforts to control it –**  
by - *Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon, Dr. L. Shrestha and Mr. D. Khadka* from SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre

By these presentations, the world forum of TB control has been acquainted with the current status of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region.

## **10.8. Participation in SAARC Consultative Meeting on Public Health Challenges in South Asia**

Dr. K. K. Jha Director, STAC participated in the SAARC Consultative Meeting on Public Health Challenges in South Asia jointly organized by SAARC Secretariat and Government of India in New Delhi from 28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

## **10.9. Participation in SAARC Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities**

Director, STAC participated in Third Meeting of SAARC Technical Committee on Health and Population activities held in New Delhi from 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009. The meeting was jointly organized by SAARC Secretariat and Government of India.

## **11. Production of STAC Publications**

**STAC printed the following publications in 2009:**

1. STAC Newsletters (both the issues, Vol. XIX No. 1 and 2)
2. SAARC Journal of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS – (Vol. VI No. 1 and 2)
3. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Report (Update) on Tuberculosis 2009
4. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Report (Update) on HIV/AIDS including TB/HIV Co-infection 2009
5. Annual Report of STAC 2008
6. Technical guidelines for QA of Sputum Smear Microscopy
7. SAARC Training Module for QA of Sputum Smear Microscopy
8. SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre – at a glance (revised version)
9. Wall Calendar 2010

### **Additional Publications**

- Brochure on General Information on TB and HIV/AIDS
- Report on Sixth Round Proficiency Testing of Sputum Smear Microscopy

## **12. Distribution of STAC Publications**

All the publications have been distributed according to mailing list. There is no any priced publication in STAC. Publications have been distributed to the people who requested to get the STAC publications through STAC library.

## **13. Review of Articles of SAARC Journal of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS**

All articles published in SAARC Journal of TB, Lung Diseases, and HIV/AIDS are reviewed by peer reviewers.



## **14. Constitution and Expansion Pool of Experts from the Region in the field of TB, HIV/AIDS and Laboratories**

In year 2006, STAC has initiated the work for the preparation of list of experts/specialists in the field of TB, HIV/AIDS and Laboratory in the region. Profiles have been preparing with more and updated information. In the year 2009, this task had been carried out with more information received from SAARC Member States as requested by SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre.

## **15. Strengthening of STAC Library**

**STAC included the following new books in the library:**

1. Harrison's Principle of International Medicine – 17<sup>th</sup> Edition
2. Oxford test-book of Medicine (3 volume set)
3. Kumar and Clark - Clinical Medicine 6<sup>th</sup> edition
4. S. M. Ross – Introductory Statistics
5. A. Indrayan – Basic Methods of Medical Research, AITS publication 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
6. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (HB & PB five pieces each)

## **16. Dissemination of Information of TB & HIV/AIDS by Updating STAC Website, Internet connectivity and hiring a consultant for upgrading STAC website**

STAC website ([www.saarctb.com.np](http://www.saarctb.com.np)) has been updated with recent information regarding the activities of the Centre along with the new publications. New software of Photo Gallery and Online Submission of Manuscripts have been developed and launched.

## **17. Sixth Round Proficiency Testing of Sputum Smear Microscopy**

AAC TB Reference Laboratory supports National TB Reference Laboratories by coordinating and conducting many lab activities such as: Quality Assurance of sputum smear microscopy, culture and Drug Susceptibility Testing, surveillance of drug resistance and TB/HIV co-infection and laboratory Bio-safety. The sixth round proficiency testing of sputum microscopy for National TB Ref. Laboratories is one of such kind. SAARC TB Reference laboratory has conducted the following rounds of QA activities:

1. First Round in 2003
2. Second Round in 2004
3. Third Round in 2005
4. Fourth Round in 2007
5. Fifth Round in 2008
6. Sixth Round in 2009

The objective of the activities was to implement an ongoing proficiency testing Programme for sputum microscopy within the Network of National TB Reference Laboratories in SAARC Region.

## Methods

A panel of 10 slides (5 stained with ZN staining technique and 5 unstained smears) was prepared & validated at SAARC Regional TB Ref. Lab according WHO/IUATLD guidelines and sent to 10 NTRLs of the Region were requested to examine the panel of slides by any two or more lab staff, who are responsible for the regular sputum smears microscopy and send back report (individual results separately without sharing each other and one institutional result as their team report) along with slides within one month. The reports were analyzed after receiving the results and examined slides from all National TB Ref. Labs.

## Results

The results revealed that three of NTRLs reported minor errors (1 QE by one NRL, 1 LFN each two NRLs and 1 LFP by one NRL). Rest of the seven labs reported no error of any type and demonstrated excellent performance.

## Conclusions

It is concluded that the performance of majority of the Ref. Labs was excellent and the participating labs showing minor errors were showed also satisfactory performance as the results were within the limit of acceptance. The NTRL Network showed similar performance in previous five rounds of proficiency testing. It is hoped that all the NTRLs will sustain their satisfactory performance.

## 18. Procurement of chemical and other lab materials for regular works at SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Reference Lab of STAC

Chemicals and materials have been procured as per the need of the Lab section.

### Research activities:

1. **A study to determine the constraints in involvement of private practitioners in TB control in Sri Lanka**
2. **Baseline CD4 counts in the adult population in Pakistan**
3. **Study on culture positivity amongst smear negative TB patients**

Above 3 research activities are under the process of completion.

4. **Estimation of under/over diagnosis of the sputum negative & extra pulmonary TB cases in TB/HIV co-infection in resource limited settings**

This activity could not be initiated.

### The following activities could not be carried out

1. Services of Professionals Editor/s from Nepal as and when necessary
2. Engagement of Service of Expert – Epidemiologist from the region for the in house training/discussion for collection and analysis and management of data
3. SAARC Regional Training of Programme Managers on DOTS Plus (MDR-TB)
4. SAARC Regional Workshop to revise SAARC regional Strategy on TB/HIV Co-infection



5. SAARC Regional Training on counseling, testing, care and support and ART
6. Conferment of SAARC Award on TB and HIV/AIDS
7. SAARC Goodwill Ambassador's Programme
8. Partnership Programmes with Medical School & with NGOs

## Other Activities

### Initiation of Online Submission of Manuscripts

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre has started facilities for submitting manuscripts for publishing in SAARC Journal of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS through online. All who access internet can submit their manuscripts for publication in this Journal. We request to visit [www.saarctb.com.np](http://www.saarctb.com.np) for the access.

### Audit of STAC Accounts 2009

Joint Audit Team of **H. A. W. Abayakumara, Director Internal Audit, Investigation & Budgetary Control, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka** and **Jamtsho, Assistant Auditor General, Royal Audit Authority, Royal Government of Bhutan** audited the annual accounts and related activities of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre of the year 2008 and submitted Joint Audit Report on the accounts and operations of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu for the period 1.1.2008 to 31.12.2008 on 07 July 2009.

### Visit of Her Excellency Ms. Susan Grace, Ambassador of Australia to Nepal

**Her Excellency Ms. Susan Grace, Ambassador** from **Government of Australia** to Nepal visited SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 and observed the functioning of the Centre. She was accompanied by Mr. Mark Bailey, Regional Counsellor for South Asia, AusAID, Ms. Elaine Ward, Director of Asia Section, AusAID, Ms. Tara Gurung, Nepal Country Manager, AusAID. Her Excellency Ms. Grace discussed on various activities being done and challenges faced by the Centre in prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region.



# **Annexures**

**SAARC Regional Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for  
National/Regional level TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control  
Programme Managers in Bangladesh  
1st-5th June 2009 Dhaka, Bangladesh**

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**SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologists for Sputum culture and Drug Susceptibility Test, NTI, Bangalore, India  
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**The Meeting of the Managers  
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