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Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India welcoming Ms Runa Laila, SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS



Hon'ble Deputy Minister, Mr. Ahmad Jan Naeem, Policy & Planning, Ministry of Public Health, Government of Afghanistan

STAC Newsletter is a regular publication of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, it includes reports on activities, decisions of important meetings of the Centre, news of important activities of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of SAARC Member States and recent information on TB, HIV/AIDS and their control.

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## Editorial

### HIV/AIDS & Nutrition

HIV/AIDS is associated with biological and social factors that may affect the ability to consume and utilize the food. These biological and social factors lead to poor nutritional status and weight loss causing morbidity in individuals infected with HIV, resulting in a poor quality of life. HIV and opportunistic infections (TB) interfere with appetite and ability to eat, thereby reducing dietary intake, causing mal-absorption of nutrients. Weight loss is an important predictor of death from AIDS. Limited food security and inadequate knowledge of good nutrition make situation more complex in PLHIV. HIV infection and associated malnutrition progressively weaken the immune system, lowering the quality of life and the odds for survival; therefore, infected persons and their caregivers need clear, concise information on nutritional care and support. Nutritional care and an adjunctive intervention to ART, will encourage rehabilitation, optimize response to therapy and enhance adherence to ARV medication. The link between nutrition and HIV/AIDS amplify the negative effects of HIV infection on human development at individuals to national and regional levels. In SAARC region the incidence of HIV/AIDS and malnutrition is impeding progress towards achieving the MDG. Therefore, Nutrition Programme in each Member States must be prioritized to improve the nutritional status.

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# Report on Activities

## 1. Review, Coordination Meeting and Sharing of Best Practices with Authorities of Ministry of Health, Foreign Ministry and National TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in Afghanistan, 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) organized a three day meeting on "Review, Coordination and Sharing of Best Practices with Authorities of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in association with Ministry of Public Health, Government of Afghanistan. The meeting was attended by Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director and Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer from STAC and representatives from CDC Directorate, National TB Control Programme and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of Afghanistan. The meeting was held in Kabul from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

The objective of the meeting was to share & exchange the new ideas, updates for the control of TB & HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan, to strengthen the coordination and collaboration between STAC and SAARC Member States and to establish a coordination for strengthening of supra regional laboratory on TB and HIV/AIDS in STAC.

The meeting reviewed the different documents published by National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of Afghanistan.

The meeting discussed the concerned issues of TB and HIV/AIDS programmes before reviewing available strategies, plans, policies and documents.

During meeting, a visit was organized to observe **National Annual Evaluation Operational Workshop for TB** which was



organized by Ministry of Public Health, Government of Afghanistan in coordination with collaborative partners such as USAID, TBCTA, WHO, JICA, CIDA, WFP and all regional and provincial TB coordinators of Afghanistan. In the workshop, Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC discussed about capacity building of staff and strengthening of research activities in TB control

programme. The STAC team also discussed with Dr. Karam Shah, WHO Representative, Afghanistan about TB programme and challenges in Afghanistan.

The team visited and observed the functioning of the following units of TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of Afghanistan:



Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC along with different health services authority of Afghanistan participating in National Workshop

## National TB Control Programme

- National TB Reference Laboratory (NRL)
- Culture Laboratory for TB
- CDC Hospital, Kabul
- Collaborative partners supporting for TB control activities in the country.

## National HIV/AIDS Control Programme

- Targeted and Harm Reduction Project, Kabul
- Briefing programme at NACP
- Collaborative partners supporting for HIV/AIDS control programme in the country.

## Debriefing Programmes

### 1. Debriefing to Hon'ble Mr. Ahmad Jan Naem, Deputy Minister, Policy & Planning, Ministry of Public Health, Government of Afghanistan

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC debriefed to Deputy Minister at the presence of Dr. Shahwali Maroofi, Director, CDC Department, Ministry of Public Health. The Director STAC highlighted overall activities and progress of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and thanked for the participation from Afghanistan in STAC activities and requested to support by nominating the participants in coming activities. He

also appealed for the support of Government of Afghanistan to strengthen Supra Regional Laboratory of TB & HIV/AIDS of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre. Simultaneously, the STAC team briefed their findings during the observation at different activities related to TB and HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan.

Hon'ble, Deputy Minister expressed

assured STAC for the support from his country to implement the programme activities in future.

### 2. Debriefing to Roya Rahmani, Director General, Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Afghanistan

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC, briefed about the visit of Afghanistan to the Director General, Regional



STAC Team with the Director General, Regional Cooperation, MOFA, Government of Afghanistan

his satisfaction and happiness on the role played by STAC in coordination of the efforts made by the SAARC Member States for the control of TB and HIV/AIDS. He also advised STAC to continue in providing technical support to every member state of SAARC. He

Cooperation, MOFA, Government of Afghanistan. Dr. Jha also highlighted the activities and status of progress of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre. He requested to the Government of Afghanistan for the continuous support to STAC in its activities. He also appealed the Director General for supporting the STAC in strengthening Supra Regional Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS. Roya Rahmani, Director General expressed her satisfaction on the progress made by STAC in the field of TB and HIV/AIDS. She advised the STAC to initiate more and more activities in different aspects of TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes. The Director thanked all Afghani team for their support and excellent arrangement for the meeting.



## 2. SAARC Regional Training on Leadership & Strategic Management for Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in Maldives, 6<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Kathmandu organized a five-day training programme on "SAARC Regional Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme" in Male, Maldives. The programme was organized by STAC in collaboration with Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives. The training programme was held from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

The **objective** of the programme was to enhance the knowledge & skills on leadership & strategic management of Programme Managers of National TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes to scale-up and strengthen the TB & HIV/AIDS prevention & control activities in the country.

All total eighteen participants from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the training.

### Opening session

Dr. Sheeza Ali, Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives graced the opening session as Chief Guest.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC welcomed the participants, resource persons and officials in the programme by extending the welcome address. In his welcome address, Dr. Jha explained the burden of TB & HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region. He added in his address that the importance of leadership & strategic management training for



Hon'ble Minister Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed, Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives with the STAC Director, Resource Persons and Official during the Closing Session of the Training

programme managers is very necessary in order to manage the dual epidemic such and TB/HIV co-epidemic effectively. He thanked the Government of India for their valuable support by sending the resource persons. He also thanked Government of Maldives for excellent arrangement of the training venue in Male.

Ms. Ashma Ibrahim, Director, Health Protecting Agency, delivered her remarks and stated that Health Protecting Agency is doing well in Maldives under the Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives. She also emphasized the need of collaborating approach in between TB and HIV/AIDS programmes to cut the co-infection. She thanked STAC for organizing the training in Maldives.

Dr. S. D. Gupta, Director, IIMR, Jaipur, India delivered his remarks by thanking STAC and Government of Maldives for organizing very useful training programme in Male. Dr. Sheeza

Ali, as Chief Guest acknowledged the achievement of TB and HIV programmes in Maldives. She mentioned that the STAC is doing supporting role in TB and HIV/AIDS programme in the SAARC Region, however still number of challenges like TB/HIV Co-infection, MDR-TB, sustaining DOTS etc. are ahead to be addressed. She emphasized that this is the opportunity in the Region to build a team of skilled managers with leadership quality required for effective control programmes. She thanked STAC for their hard work exerted in organizing this training in Male. Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC delivered vote of thanks.

### Technical Session

The session started with welcome address by Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC. Dr. Bhatta presented functioning and role of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre along with current situation of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region.

Dr. S. G. Gupta and Dr. Nutan Prabha Jain from IIHMR, Jaipur, India facilitated the programme as resource persons with support from supportive staff.

A pre-test assessment was conducted by distributing questionnaires before commencement of the training.

The technical session was started with the introduction of methodology to be used in this session. Dr. Nutan P. Jain elaborated the objective of the training, the resource materials to be used in the training and the methodology they are going to apply in this training.

There were eight types of training modules, individual exercises & questionnaires, group work, interactive session with discussions, brainstorming session, case studies, role plays, game, presentations on objective of the training and plenary discussion.

Dr. S. D. Gupta presented his first technical presentation on the "Overview of Leadership and Strategic Management in TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme.

A field visit programme was organized to observe K. Thulusdhoo Health Centre. The purpose of visit was to know the real situation of the health centre. The team was welcomed and briefed by Medical Officer of the Health Centre.

Dr. Nutan P. Jain presented her presentation on module personnel effectiveness, which was used as the guide and introduced "JOHARI WINDOW",



A view of Technical Session, where participants are reading STAC Publications

She elaborated importance of three quality of a manager in order to improve the personnel effectiveness, such as openness, feed-back and perceptiveness.

Another presentation of Dr. Jain was on Important Aspects of Role Efficacy with the job position and role.

On the presentation "Effective Communication" Dr. Gupta elaborated various channels of communication and barriers to communicate the messages.

Leadership Style was also taught along with the exercises. Before completion of the training, a post test assessment was conducted. The participants also filled up the training evaluation form in order to obtain their genuine opinion to improve the programme in future.

### Closing Session

The session started with the post-test assessment, filling up the training evaluation forms along with their genuine opinion about the overall training, training logistics etc. The analytical result

of the training evaluation was discussed with the participants.

Hon'ble Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, Minister of Health, Government of Maldives graced the occasion as Chief Guest and delivered his remarks. Hon'ble Minister explained the importance of building up the confidence of officials working with high profile managers and the importance of coordination between them in accomplishing common goals of the health sector. He extended thanks to all participants, facilitators and Officials for successful completion of the training. He also thanked STAC for selecting Male as training venue.

Dr. Hassan Shifau, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives welcomed all participants, resource persons and officials in Maldives. He emphasized the important role of SAARC and STAC in development of skillful manpower in overall development of the country.

Dr. S. G. Gupta and Dr. Nutan P. Jain congratulated the

participants for their keen interest and enthusiasm towards the training and thanked STAC for organizing this important programme.

On behalf of participants, four participants delivered their opinion and comments regarding the training. They expressed their satisfaction and happiness for getting opportunity to participate in the training. They thanked STAC, Government of Maldives and all concerned authorities for organizing such an important training in Maldives.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, extended his sincere thanks to

Government of SAARC Member States for sending participants. He thanked SAARC Secretariat for continued support to STAC for implementation of activities in Member States. He also thanked Government of Maldives for accepting the request and providing venue for training with excellent arrangements. Dr. Jha thanked all participants, facilitators and officials for their support to the training for making it a grand success.

Hon'ble Health Minister awarded certificates and training documents to participants and facilitators.

## Outcomes

The participants updated their knowledge on leadership skills along with the strategic management and development of a group of motivated programme managers equipped with updated information on managerial style and dynamic leadership. The participants strengthened their ideas in liaison & collaboration between NTP and NACP among SAARC Region. The participants can use this knowledge and leadership qualities to achieve the MDGs and to scale up the prevention and control activities further.

### 3. Review, Coordination Meeting and Sharing of Best Practices with Authorities of Ministry of Health, Foreign Ministry and National TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in Sri Lanka, 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) organized a review and coordination meeting in Sri Lanka in coordination with Ministry of Health, National Programme for TB Control and Chest Disease and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme of Sri Lanka from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

The objective of the meeting was to share & exchange the new ideas, updates for the control of TB & HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka, to strengthen the coordination and collaboration between STAC and SAARC Member States and to establish a coordination for strengthening of supra regional laboratory on TB and HIV/AIDS in STAC.

The meeting reviewed the different documents published by National

TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of Sri Lanka.

The meeting discussed the concerned issues of TB and HIV/AIDS programmes before reviewing available strategies, plans, policies and related documents.

#### Meeting with National Programme for TB Control and Chest Disease (NPTCCD)

Joint meeting was organized by NTP Sri Lanka on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013. In the meeting present status of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre along with its achievements & challenges were presented. National TB Control Programme, Sri Lanka presented interactive information about TB control programme in Sri Lanka. The discussion was based on low case-

finding how to reach the unreached population, returnees from refugee camp population, age shifting, prevalence based data and new initiatives of the TB programme in Sri Lanka. Some new initiatives were discussed on electronic patients information management system for TB, counseling component for TB patients and patients with TB/HIV co-infection along with their family/partners. NTP, Sri Lanka also prioritized PAL program for this year. The TB laboratory and culture facilities are also planned for expansion in phase wise. Two culture centers are providing services and another two are in preparation for expansion. Overall data management system and networking is appreciable. There is no problem of financing at present but long term funding for sustaining TB control activities is

required. Dr. K. K. Jha, Director and Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC, Dr. K.N. Gamini Senavirathna, Director and Dr. Sudath Samaraweera, Deputy Director, NPTCCD, Sri Lanka attended the meeting.

### Meeting with National STD / AIDS Control Programme (NSACP)

The National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP), Ministry of Health, spearheads the national response to HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka. NSACP is the focal point for planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan and AIDS Policy together with all stakeholders.

The National Strategic Plan 2013-2017 (NSP) guides the National response to HIV/AIDS and the overall goal of the NSP of Sri Lanka is to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on the social development of the country.

Joint meeting was organized by NSACP on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013. In the meeting presentation on status of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) along with status of HIV/AIDS control in the SAARC Member States were presented. NSACP presented interactive information about National STD/HIV/AIDS control program in Sri Lanka. The discussion was based on IBBS information and VCT accessibility in country. Dr. K. K. Jha, Director STAC discussed about the laboratory strengthening and prevalence based data in SAARC Member States. Even Sri Lanka is experiencing a low level HIV epidemic; new initiatives of the program were discussed in the meeting.

### Debriefing meeting to Director General for Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka

and requested to extend the participation in coming days. Dr. Jha also requested to support for the strengthening of Supra Regional Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC TB and



STAC Team Talking with Director General for Regional Cooperation, MOFA, Government of Sri Lanka

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC briefed the findings of the meeting to Mrs. R. D. Rajapaksa, Director General (SAARC Affairs), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka in a meeting. In this meeting the Directors of NSACP and NPTCCD were also presented. In the meeting STAC Director thanked for the participation from Sri Lanka in the activities of STAC

HIV/AIDS Centre. Director General was very much optimistic with STAC activities and assured for further technical support and cooperation to STAC in future.

### Debriefing meeting with Director General of Health Services



STAC team is discussing with Director General, of Health Services, Government of Sri Lanka



A meeting was organized to brief the findings of the visit of STAC team to Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Director General of Health Services, Government of Sri Lanka. Director STAC briefed the present status of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, its achievements and challenges ahead along with the information on TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC Member

States. STAC Director highlighted about STAC program and achievements. Director General was very much optimistic of STAC's role in the coordination and cooperation for the technical supports.

### Visit to SAARC Cultural Center, Sri Lanka

For the purpose of collaboration and coordination with two centers; STAC team visited SAARC Cultural Center, Colombo. During the visit STAC team and staff of the SAARC Cultural Centre discussed on the cooperation and coordination between the Centres and further development of the SAARC Regional Centres for the benefit of the people of the Region.

## 4. SAARC Regional Training on Management Information for Action (MIFA) for TB & HIV/AIDS Control, Sri Lanka, 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013



SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) organized a five day SAARC Training Programme on Management Information for Action (MIFA) for TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programme in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka in Colombo from 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

The objectives of the activity were to support the SAARC Member States on strengthening and improving the health management information system related to TB & HIV/AIDS control programmes and to assist the National TB & HIV/AIDS control programmes to review the epidemiological data.

Sixteen participants altogether from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the training. The programme was facilitated by Dr. Anoop Khanna, Associate Professor, IIMR, Jaipur, India and National facilitators from Sri Lanka.

The inauguration of the training programme was held under the Chairmanship of Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Director General of Health Services, Government of Sri Lanka. The programme was jointly inaugurated by Dr. Palitha Mahipala, DG of Health Services and Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC along with other dignitaries.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC delivered welcome speech and highlighted about the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and importance of the training on health management information system and action. Dr. Sisira Liganage, Director, National STD and AIDS Control Programme, Government of Sri Lanka delivered vote of thanks.

Technical session started with the presentation on "Contribution of STAC to TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programme in SAARC Member State" along with the objectives and methodology of the training. This presentation was made by Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, SATC.

Dr. Anoop Khanna, Associate Professor, IIMR, Jaipur, India as a Resource Person of the training, presented on "Database Management – An over view" to start the practical session of the training. Very useful and renowned statistical packages like MS Excel, SPSS etc. were practiced.

Dr. Shamini Prathapan, Sr. Lecturer, University of Sri Jayewardanapura, presented paper on "Introduction of Epidemiology and Descriptive Epidemiology". Dr. Nalika Gunawardena, Sr. Lecturer,

University of Colombo presented paper on "Causality".

Detail practice on handling the data software was conducted on the basis of hypothetical questionnaires. Each participant were provided laptop computer with sufficient practical information to work out.

Dr. Chathrini Gajaweera, NSACP, Dr. Nirosha Dissanayake, NSACP and Dr. M. Ajwath, NPTCCD discussed on various epidemiological aspects of TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes.

Participants were divided into different groups to work out on quarterly report for their practice before closing of the training.

Mrs. R. D. Rajapaksa, DG, SAARC Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka graced the closing session, where Dr. Sunil De Alwis, DDG, ET & R, Sri Lanka, Dr. Gamini Servavirathna, NPTCCD, Sri Lanka, Dr. Sisira Liyanage, NSACP of Sri Lanka and Dr. Kashi Kant Jha & Dr. G. K. Bhatta, STAC along with

the participants were present on the occasion.

Dr. Gamini delivered his remarks and thanked participants, resource person, facilitators and officials for the success of the training. Dr. Anoop Khanna, IIMHR, Jaipur gave his remarks and appreciated for the proper arrangement of the training and thanked Government of Sri Lanka and STAC.

Dr. Alwis, in his remarks, appreciated the efforts made by STAC in the control of TB & HIV/AIDS in SAARC Member States.

Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC delivered his closing remarks. He extended his sincere thanks to Government of Sri Lanka for accepting the request to organize this training in Colombo and providing genius experts to conduct the training. He thanked Government of SAARC Member States for sending participants to attend the training. He also thanked Resource Person, facilitators and

officials for their contributions to make the training successful.

On behalf of the participants, Dr. Janaki Vidanapathirana, CCP, NSACP thanked the organizers, resource person and facilitators for organizing the training successfully. She assured the organizers on behalf of the participants that they will apply their knowledge obtained in this training in their work.

Participants and Resource Persons/Facilitators were awarded certificates. Dr. SiSira Liyanage, Director, NSACP delivered vote of thanks.

### Outcome of the training

Participants were successfully trained in applying data soft-wares to analyze the epidemiological data required for health management information system in TB and HIV/AIDS.

## 5. Visit of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS

On the invitation of SAARC Secretariat, Ms. Runa Laila, SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS made official visit to India, with the objective to extend support on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and issues of Stigma and Discrimination related to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). Ms. Runa Laila from Bangladesh has been conferred the honorary title of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador by SAARC Secretariat for the next two years along with Shri Ajay Devgan from India and Ms. Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy from Pakistan.

Ms. Runa Laila, SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS reached

New Delhi, India on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to initiate the SAARC Goodwill

Ambassador's programme for HIV/AIDS. Mr. Lov Verma,



Secretary, Department of AIDS Control, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India coordinated the visit programme.

Ms. Sanchali Roy, NACO, Department of AIDS Control, Government of India, Dr. Ghanshyam Kumar Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC and Ms. Meena Dhakal, Sr. PA, STAC, Kathmandu welcomed her at the International Airport, New Delhi.

### **Courtesy Call on the Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India**

Ms. Runa Laila, called on Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Salman Khurshid, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India at the Ministry. Ms. Runa Laila expressed her happiness on her selection as SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS. She expressed her concept on how to reach to unreached population for HIV/AIDS awareness. She expressed her congratulation to the Hon'ble, Minister for RED RIBBON EXPRESS Programme in India. Hon'ble Minister congratulated her on taking up the responsibility of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS and discussed to have a concert programme in different major city in the region for disseminating proper information to reduce the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV/AIDS.

### **Sensitizing Meeting**

A sensitization meeting was jointly organized by the NACO, Department of AIDS Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Government of India and SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre for the SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS in New-Delhi, India. The

overall objective of the meeting was to sensitize SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Naresh Goel, DDG on behalf of Department of AIDS Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Government of India, extended a warm welcome to Ms. Runa Laila, SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS.

Welcoming the Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS on behalf of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu, Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, highlighted the Global and SAARC Regional Situation of TB and HIV/AIDS. He also presented SAARC Regional Strategy for HIV/AIDS in which the programme of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS is mentioned.

### **Visit at Department of AIDS Control, India**

Mr. Lov Verma, Secretary and Ms. Aradhana Johari, Additional Secretary, Department of AIDS Control welcomed SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS. National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) Programme Officer, HIV/AIDS, made a presentation on regional HIV/AIDS scenario and India's role in

controlling the epidemic. The DAC team also made presentation to Ms. Runa Laila on the HIV/AIDS programme in the country highlighting on different interventions being implemented for reversing epidemic. Goodwill Ambassador also congratulated DAC for successful implementation like RED RIBBON EXPRESS mission.

### **Visit at Service Provided Center**

The Goodwill Ambassador and STAC along with NACO team visited an ART Centre at LNJP Hospital, which is one of the first ART centers in the country that has been upgraded as Centre of Excellence in HIV care now. This centre is providing free HIV treatment to more than 2000 HIV infected people. She interacted with the beneficiaries and appreciated the high quality care being provided to PLHIV without any stigma & discrimination. Ms Runa Laila also visited HIV Counseling and Testing Centre at Dr B R Ambedkar Hospital, Rohini, Delhi and interacted with pregnant women availing services.

### **Press Conference**

A press conference was held in honour to SAARC Goodwill



Ms. Runa Laila, SAARC Goodwill Ambassador attending Press Conference during her visit to New Delhi

Ambassador. In the conference Dr. Naresh Goel, DDG Department of AIDS Control welcomed all journalists and briefed the impact of programme in India. STAC representative also briefed the situation of HIV/AIDS in SAARC Member States. Ms Runa Laila appreciated the efforts made by the Department of AIDS Control which has resulted in reduction of new HIV infections. As a message to community she emphasized that all pregnant women should get themselves tested for HIV and if

found positive, should start ART to prevent transmission to the new born.

### **Courtesy Call on the Honorable Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India**

Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad extended a warm welcome to Ms Runa Laila and congratulated her on being appointed as SAARC Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS. During the meeting various important issues related to HIV/AIDS for the benefit of

marginalized people of the SAARC region were discussed. Hon'ble Minister briefed about the internationally acclaimed success of India in HIV programme especially the commendable scale up in testing and treatment services, the prevention of parent to child programme and the migrant strategy.

They also discussed about the need for enhanced scale of care, support and treatment services for eligible HIV infected persons and requirement of initiating regional action to tackle cross border issues on HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection. From the Department of AIDS Control Mr. Lov Verma, Secretary, Aradhana Johri, Additional Secretary and Dr. Ghanshyam Kumar Bhatta (STAC) were present in the Meeting. Ms. Runa Laila, Goodwill Ambassador handed over the SAARC souvenir to Shri Gulam Nabi Azad. She left India on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2013.



## **Brief News**

### **Observation visit to STAC by Participants of CABA**



Consultative meeting to review achievements and progress on protection, care & support for children affected by HIV and AIDS in the South Asia was organized jointly by the SAARC Secretariat and UNICEF on 09-10 September 2013 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Team members of the meeting made an observation visit to SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal to observe the functioning of the Centre and to know the regional activities of the SAARC Regional Centres.

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The team consist the following health dignitaries from the SAARC Member States.

- Dr. Moinullah Zafari, CDC Surveillance, Ministry of Public Health, Afghanistan,
- Dr. Noor Hassan Basharyar, Provincial HIV Co-ordinator, NACP, Jalalabad, Afghanistan,
- Ms. Dechen MO, (DHO Paro), Ministry of Health, Government of Bhutan,
- Dr. Choeda Gyaltshen, Medical Officer, Punakha District Hospital, Bhutan,

- Dr. Anil Kumar Gupta, Additional Project Director/Technical Lead, Delhi State AIDS Control Society, India,
- Mr. Abdul Hameed, National Programme Manager, HIV/AIDS, Maldives,
- Dr. Sisira Ananda Harisingha, Director, NCASP, Sri Lanka and
- Dr. M. K. D. Senanayake, Provincial Director of Health Services, UVA, Department of Health Services, Sri Lanka.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC welcomed the team and

briefed about the regional activities and strategy of the Centre related to HIV/AIDS. The visitors observed the infrastructure and facilities of the Centre.

### Visit of a Team from IPPF

Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury and Ms. Neha Chauhan from International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) visited STAC and discussed the matters related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region.

They expressed their willingness to work together as partners with STAC in future.

## Publication of SAAC Journal

STAC has already published its 1<sup>st</sup> Issue of the SAARC Journal of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS of the year 2013. This Vol. X, No. 1 contains five Original Articles, 2 Case Studies and 1 Review Article and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Issue is under process to be published. Published journal can be obtained on STAC website [www.saarc.org](http://www.saarc.org). The printed copies are available in STAC Library at Thimi, Bhaktapur free

of cost. The researchers and the personnel who want to publish their research article can be sent online submission system available on STAC website or directly through e-mail to the Centre. The e-mail ID of the Centre is [saarctb@mos.com.np](mailto:saarctb@mos.com.np). Before submitting the article, you are requested to browse <http://saarctb.org/journalonline/about-the-journal.html>



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## Participation in National/Regional/International Activities

### - **Participation in IAS 2013**

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director and Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2013) held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013. The event was organized by the IAS, in partnership with Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS (CERiA), University of Malaya, a

centre established in 2007 to undertake HIV-related research with a particular focus on HIV and substance use and related co-morbidities including tuberculosis.

The purpose of the visit was to know updated ART Guidelines – 2013, which was published by WHO and relevant research works.

### **Participation in meeting on CABA:**

Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC participated in Consultative Meeting jointly organized by SAARC Secretariat and UNICEF in Kathmandu, Nepal from 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The objective of the meeting was to review the achievements & progress on protection, care & support for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS (CABA) in the South Asia.

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