Annual Report 2012
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SAARC

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre

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Annexure
Attempts have been made to support the efforts of Member States in control of TB and prevention of HIV/AIDS by implementing different activities. SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) implemented its programmes during the period of January to December 2012 successfully. It would have been impossible to conduct the activities without support of the Programme Managers of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of SAARC Member States. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Programme Managers for their active support and kind co-operation to carry out the activities.

Besides the regular activities, the Centre has performed its major activities such as development of human resources, finalized the draft of SAARC strategy for elimination/control of Tuberculosis in the SAARC Member States etc. The Centre has taken research activities as a critical tool in developing an evidence based and effective health response to meet the needs of the TB control, HIV/AIDS control and TB/HIV collaboration of the Member States of the SAARC Region. STAC carried out the research activities on important issues of TB and HIV/AIDS.

I believe that the activities performed by STAC have provided support to the National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of Member States in the implementation of the programme successfully.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Saleem, Secretary General of SAARC and Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director, SAARC Secretariat for their guidance, support and co-operation to implement the activities effectively. I would also like to thank WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP and other partners working in the field of TB & HIV/AIDS for their co-operation.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Governments of SAARC Member States for their cooperation and support for successful organization of STAC activities.

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

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha
Director
SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre
Kathmandu
SAARC

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (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. The SAARC comprises of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The main objective of the association is to accelerate the process of economic and social development in Member States through joint action in the agreed areas of cooperation. SAARC is supported by different Regional Centres established in Member States to promote regional cooperation.

The Heads of State or Government of Member States of SAARC at their 5th Summit held in Male on 22-23 November 1990 decided to establish SAARC Tuberculosis Centre in Nepal.

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) is one of the Regional Centres of SAARC. The STAC is also a WHO collaborating centre for TB, TB/HIV, research and training. The Centre has developed its network between the Member States in different aspects of TB and HIV/AIDS control. The Centre coordinates with the NTPs and NACPs of Members States for implementation of Regional Strategies. It also supports in sharing of experiences of new findings in coordinated manner. Human resource development is taken as one of the major task of the Centre, so that the Centre is supporting the Member States in the field of skill development and upgrading of the knowledge & capacity of the staff working in National TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes. STAC has been performing Quality Assurance (QA) of sputum smear microscopy activity of National TB Reference Laboratories of SAARC Member States and has already completed nine rounds of proficiency testing. The Centre communicates & disseminates the information to the Member States through different technical documents and reports for the sake of sharing of experiences. The Centre also participates in National/International review of NTPs and NACPs of Member States on the request and performs any additional activities identified by the Governing Board of STAC.

Goal & Objective

The goal of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre is to minimize the mortality and morbidity due to TB and HIV/AIDS in the region and to minimize the transmission of both infections until TB and HIV/AIDS cease to be major public health problems in the SAARC Region and the objective of the Centre is to work for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National TB Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States.

Vision & Mission

The vision of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) be the leading institute to support and guide SAARC Member States to make the Region free of TB and HIV/AIDS and the Mission is to support the efforts of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes through evidence based policy guidance, coordination and technical support.
Functions

The functions of the Centre have been defined in brief as follows:

- The Centre act as a Regional Co-ordination Centre for NTPs and NACPs in the SAARC Region.
- The Centre promotes and coordinates the action for prevention of TB/HIV co-infection in the SAARC Region.
- The Centre collects, collates, analyze and disseminate all relevant information regarding the latest development and findings in the field of Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in the Region and elsewhere.
- The Centre establishes networking arrangements among the NTPs and NACP of Member Countries and conduct surveys, research etc.
- The Centre initiates, undertakes and coordinates the Research and Training in Technical Bio-medical, operational and other aspects related to Tuberculosis Control Programmes & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes in the SAARC Region.
- The Centre monitors the incidence, prevalence and emergence of drug resistant strains of Tuberculosis in the SAARC Region.
- The Centre assists Member States for harmonization of policies and strategies on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection.
- The centre assists National TB Reference Laboratories in the Member States in quality assurance of sputum microscopy and standardization of culture and drug sensitivity testing and implementation of bio-safety measures.
- To carryout other important works identified by the Programming Committees and Governing Board.

The Governing Board

The Governing Board meets at least once in a year to plan the Programmes and Budget for the coming year. It also reviews the progress and activities of the previous year/s. The Board recommends the policy decisions of the Centre and finalizes its programme, activities and budget. The Board is constituted by nominated members from SAARC Member States, representative of His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC, representative from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal and Director of the Centre as Member Secretary.
Twenty-first Meeting of the Governing Board

The Twenty-first Meeting of the Board was held in Kathmandu from 21st to 22nd September 2011. The Board reviewed the activities carried out by the Centre for 2011 pursuant to the 20th meeting of the Board and discussed programme activities and budget (Institutional and Programme Cost) for the year 2012 submitted by the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and recommended the following programmes to be carried out by the Centre for the approval of the Programming and Standing Committee:

**Recommended Programmes for the year 2012**

1. SAARC Regional Training on Tuberculosis Infection Control
2. Experience sharing by Regional Experts through observation of National TB Control programme implementation and best practices, Bangladesh
3. SAARC Regional Training on “Research Methodology for Protocol Development” (TB and HIV/AIDS Programme)
4. SAARC Regional TOT for Microbiologist for culture and DST of M. tuberculosis
5. Experience sharing by Regional Experts through observation of the National HIV/AIDS control Programme implementation and best practice, India
6. SAARC Training on Management Information for Action (MIFA) on TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes
7. The SAARC Regional Meeting of Managers of National TB Control Programmes for Programme review and Management of Cross Border issues
8. SAARC Regional Expert Group Meeting of TB Programme Managers to finalize the draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the control / Elimination of Tuberculosis
9. SAARC Consultative Meeting of Programme Managers of HIV/AIDS to revise the SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2012-2016)
10. Expert Group Meeting on HIV/AIDS; special session to finalize the SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2012-2016)
11. The SAARC Regional Meeting of Managers of National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes for Programme review
13. Preparation of draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the Control/Elimination of Tuberculosis in the Region
14. Conferment of SAARC Prize on HIV/AIDS
15. Programmes for SAARC Goodwill Ambassador/s for HIV/AIDS
16. Meetings with Collaborating Institutions for Strengthening Networking - WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA & other collaborating Institutes
17. Presentation & Dissemination of Research findings on TB & HIV/AIDS through participation in International Conferences 43rd Union World Conference on Lung Health/International AIDS Conference on HIV/AIDS
18. Participation in Regional Conferences in the Member States
19. 9th Round Proficiency testing of NRLs in SAARC Member States,
20. Participation of STAC officials in Review of NTP/NACP of Member States

**Research**

21. Genotyping of Multi-drug Resistant Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Strains in SAARC Region at STAC
22. Study to determine the causes related to sub-optimal participation of private practitioners in National TB Program in Nepal
23. Study of factors associated with development of MDR in TB patients on DOTS - Bhutan
24. HIV Prevalence among TB patients visiting National Tuberculosis Centre, Nepal and drug susceptibility pattern M. Tuberculosis Isolated from TB patients with or without HIV infection, Nepal
25. The Pharmacovigilance study on FDC’s (Anti TB drugs) in Sri-Lanka

**Regular Activities, Commemoration/Celebration of;**

27. Distribution of STAC Publications
29. Dissemination of information of TB & HIV/AIDS by updating STAC Website
30. Procurement of chemicals and other lab materials for SAARC Reference Laboratory
31. Purchase / subscription of books and journals

**Printing of STAC Publications**

32. STAC Newsletters
33. SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS
34. SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Reports (Updates) on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS separately - 2012
35. Annual Report - 2011
36. Report of 9th Round Proficiency Testing of NRLs of SAARC Member States
38. SAARC Regional Strategy on Advocacy, Communication & Social Mobilization for TB and HIV/AIDS
39. SAARC Regional Directory of Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, Laboratory Institutions and Experts
40. Wall Calendar 2013
Twenty-second Governing Board Meeting

On the invitation of SAARC Secretariat and SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), the Twenty-second meeting of the Governing Board of STAC was held in Kathmandu from 11th to 12th October 2012 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Asif Hussain Memon, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Pakistan, Kathmandu, Nepal. The Board Members from the Royal Government of Bhutan, Government of Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka along with representatives of SAARC Secretary General and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nepal) participated in the meeting.

The Board Meeting was opened by out going Chairperson of the Governing Board.

**Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director**, STAC extended a warm welcome to all Board Members in the meeting.

**Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree**, Director, Social Affairs Division, SAARC Secretariat highlighted the role of SAARC Regional Centres functioning in identified areas in Member States.

The meeting was attended by **Dr. Md. Abdul Waheed**, Line Director, National AIDS/STD Programme & Safe Blood Transfusion Programme, Dhaka, Bangladesh, **Dr. Dorji Wangchuk**, Director General, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, **Mr. Yagya Bahadur Hamal**, Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu, Nepal, **Mr. Asif Hussain Memon**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Pakistan, Kathmandu, Nepal and **Dr Sudath Samaraweera**, Acting Director, National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Board reviewed the programme activities carried out by the Centre in 2011/12 and recommended the programmes and budget for the year 2013 for the approval of Programming Committee and Standing Committee.
Programmes for the year 2013

1. SAARC Regional Sensitization Meeting for Social Determinants of Health in relation to TB and HIV/AIDS, Afghanistan

2. SAARC Regional Training on “Technical and Operational Aspects of Anti Retro Viral Therapy” for HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Bangladesh

3. SAARC Regional Training on Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization, Bhutan

4. SAARC Regional Workshop for Experiences and Best Practices sharing for TB Control relating to Public-Private-Mix (PPM) Activities, Early case detection and reaching the unreached, India

5. SAARC Regional Training for Microbiologist on culture and DST, India

6. SAARC Regional Training on “Leadership and Strategic Management” for Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes, Maldives

7. The SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers on TB and HIV/AIDS Control, Nepal

8. SAARC Trainer’s Training on Behavioral Change and Communication (BCC), Pakistan

9. SAARC Regional Training on “Management Information for Action (MIFA)” for Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes, Sri Lanka

Research

10. Frequency and Factors Associated with Childhood Tuberculosis in Bangladesh

11. Frequency and Factors Associated with Childhood Tuberculosis in Afghanistan/Nepal

12. TB among Young People on rise in Sri-Lanka

13. Operational Research on TB/HIV Co-infection: (TREATMENT ADHERENCE AMONG CO-INFECTED) in Nepal

Regular Activities

14. Tenth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Members States

15. Procurement of chemical & other lab materials for Culture, DST and identification of M. tuberculosis and other related works at the STRL

16. i. Identification and networking with National Reference Laboratory on HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Member States (through Correspondence) by STAC

ii. Collection of Information on demographics, vital statistics and other indicators on HIV/AIDS and produce SAARC Regional Epidemiological Reports HIV/AIDS (through correspondence) by STAC

iii. Document on Epidemiological Trend on HIV/AIDS of SAARC Member States of last ten years and Generating and Managing HIV/AIDS database through clinical, epidemiological and social research for evidence based approaches (through correspondence) by STAC

iv. Documentation of the best practices on treatment, care and support on HIV/AIDS in the Member States (through correspondence) by STAC
v. Situation analysis of mechanism for migration of diagnosed HIV infected persons who need to continue their Care, Support & Treatment for HIV/AIDS (through correspondence) by STAC

vi. Collection of Information regional data on demographics, vital statistics(TB and TB-HIV Co-infection and other indicators) and produce SAARC Regional Epidemiological Reports on TB and TB-HIV Co-infection and Strength regional data base on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV Co-infection (through correspondence) by STAC

vii. Preparation of SAARC Technical Bulletin on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Epidemic (monthly) for electronically circulation to the Member States

viii. Collection, compilation, analysis and documentation on Epidemiological Trend on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/ HIV-Co-infection of SAARC Member States of last ten years (through correspondence) by STAC

17. Meetings with Collaborating Institutions for Strengthening Networking – WHO / UNAIDS / UNFPA & other collaborating Institutes


19. Participation in Regional Conferences in the Member States

20. Review, Coordination Meetings and sharing of best practices with authorities of Ministry of Health, National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes and SAARC Regional Countries in the SAARC Member States


Awareness and Advocacy

22. Programmes for SAARC Goodwill Ambassador/s for HIV/AIDS

23. Conferment of SAARC Award on Tuberculosis-2013

24. i. World TB Day
   - Joint activities with NTP Nepal
   - Preparation and publication of advocacy materials and distribution to the Member States

ii. World AIDS Day
   - Preparation & publication of advocacy materials/booklet and distribution to the Member States
   - Interaction Programme

iii. SAARC Charter Day
   - Awareness Programme /joint programme with SIC
   - Preparation and Publication related documents and distribution to the Member States

25. Distribution of STAC Publications, related documents and other materials

27. **Printing of STAC Publications**

i. Printing of STAC Newsletters

ii. Printing of STAC Journals of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS

iii. Printing of SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Reports (Updates) on TB

iv. Printing of SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Reports (Updates) on HIV/AIDS Control including TB/HIV Co-infection

v. Printing Annual Report - 2012

vi. Printing of STAC at a Glance (revision)

28. **Strengthening of STAC library**

i. Purchase and subscription of scientific books and journals on TB and HIV/AIDS

ii. Prepare a printed library catalogue

iii. Arrangement of External backup for all library resources available materials

iv. Binding of Journal/books/publications etc.

v. Linkage of library resources in the STAC Website

vi. Strengthening of audio visual section with facility of Audio visual Conference and Teleconference

vii. Collection, compile and circulation of published scientific articles and important news related to TB and in the national daily news papers in the SAARC Member States through its website (through internet)

viii. Hiring of library IT consultant for strengthening of STAC Library as E-Library

29. Technical Assistant support to the STAC, NTP/NACP, Member States by providing short term consultancy, utilizing the Expertise from the Region without financial liability to respective programmes of Member States.
1. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers for Microbiologist on Culture and DST of *M. Tuberculosis*

**Background**

In pursuance of the decision of the 21st Meeting of the Governing Board of the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), SAARC Regional Training of Trainers for Microbiologist on Culture and DST of *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis* was organized jointly by the STAC and Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP), Government of India at National Tuberculosis Institute (NTI) Bangalore, India on 23-29 May, 2012.

**Objective**

The objective of the training was to produce trainers to train on culture and DST of *M. tuberculosis*.

**Participation**

The participants from Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri-Lanka and Pakistan attended the Training. List of Participants and Resource Persons is placed at ANNEX - I.

**Opening Session**

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS (STAC), Dr. Prahlad Kumar, Director, National Tuberculosis Institute (NTI), Bangalore, India jointly opened the training by lighting the traditional lamp.
In the opening remarks, Director, NTI welcomed the participants and resource persons in the training and thanked STAC for selecting NTI as training venue. The Director, STAC thanked Government of India for the permission to organize training at NTI. In his remarks, he added importance and need of training for the better management of TB laboratory. He also highlighted the “Situation of TB in the SAARC Region, its challenge, role and importance of laboratory services in TB Control”. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC highlighted the objectives and importance of the Training and Dr. Badri Thapa, Microbiologist, STAC delivered the vote of thanks. Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran, Resource Person from WHO/SEARO also highlighted the importance of the training in view of MDR-TB and DR-TB diagnosis & monitoring.

Technical Session

The technical session was started with the pre-test, presentations and demonstrations. The practical session was carried out as per the approved agenda.

Presentation of Papers

The following papers were presented:

1. Introduction to STAC, its activities and activities of SAARC Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory
2. Minimum requirement for TB culture and DST laboratory
3. Biomedical waste management and Bio-safety in TB Laboratory
4. WHO guidelines/policy for diagnosis of tuberculosis
5. Personnel Protective Equipments in TB laboratory

Demonstration

The participants observed the following demonstrations:

- Sample collection, processing and packaging
- Preparation of drug free and drug containing media
- Sterility test and storage
- Primary culture, inoculation, incubation procedures, identification tests, reading
- Preparation of Mac Farland Standard 1 & 0.5
- Performing reading of DST result
- Calibration of loop
- Washing and sterilization
- ZN and fluorescent microscopy
- Procedure for transportation of strains
- Use of personnel protective equipments

The demonstration helped participants to observe in real time what is happening in TB laboratory. The participants also shared their TB laboratory work experiences and best practices followed in the National and Provincial laboratories in respective Member States. The post test conducted showed that the participants enhanced their knowledge on M. tuberculosis culture and DST.
Closing

The Director, STAC and Director, NTI distributed the certificates to the participants and Resource Persons along with the closing remarks. The participants appreciated the training session for enhancing their knowledge and they express their satisfaction about Training. Ms H. Sundaram delivered the vote of thanks.

Outcomes

1. Participants learned the standards required for MTB culture and DST.
2. The participants gained knowledge on WHO policy and guidelines on TB diagnostics (Sputum Smear Microscopy, FM Microscopy, Solid Culture and DST, Liquid Culture, LAMP Assay, Line Probe Assay, Capilia TB and Xpert MTB/RIF)
3. The participants learned bio-safety issues related to TB laboratory
4. The participants learned management of laboratory waste, sterilization and disinfection appropriate for TB laboratory.
5. Participants were able to identify the problems related to culture and DST and the ways to troubleshoot them.
6. The participants gained knowledge on FM and LED-based FM Microscopy techniques (reagent preparation, staining and observation) and External Quality Assurance System related to FM Microscopy.
7. The participants were able to assess the performance of TB laboratory.

**Background**

The SAARC Consultative Meeting of Programme Managers of HIV/AIDS to develop the SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2012-2016) was held, in collaboration with the UNDP, from 15-17 June 2012 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Objective**

The objectives of the meeting were to review the existing SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS and to develop the SAARC Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2012-2016). This will help to bring the SAARC Member States on a platform to prevent HIV in the region.

**Participation**

The Meeting was attended by representatives of all Member States except Bangladesh. Besides the Member States, representatives from SAARC Secretariat, SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF and NGOs attended in the Meeting. The List of Participants is placed at **ANNEX-II**

**Opening Session**

The Meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Anees-ul-Hassnain Mosavi, Secretary, Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC). In his address, he welcomed the delegates and wished for the successful outcome of the meeting. He highlighted that the meeting will strengthen work at the regional level through improved coordination, collaboration...
and partnership between regional organizations and national programmes especially for TB, HIV/AIDS and STI prevention and treatment programmes.

Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director SAARC Secretariat on behalf of Secretary General, SAARC Secretariat welcomed the participants from the Member States and UN agencies and conveyed his good wishes for a successful meeting.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director STAC in his speech highlighted the need of the revised regional HIV/AIDS strategy regarding current scenario of the epidemic.

Dr. Qazi Mujtaba Kamal, National Programme Manager, National AIDS Control Programme, Ministry of IPC in his speech emphasized the need of the revised HIV/AIDS strategy to address the cross borders issues in the region.

The Meeting elected Dr. Qazi Mujtaba Kamal, National Programme Manager, National AIDS Control Programme, Ministry of IPC and the leader of the delegation of Pakistan, as its Chairperson by acclamation.

Presentations

Dr. Naseem Khan Afridi, Epidemiologist, STAC gave the participants an overview on Objectives & Methodology of the meeting to develop SAARC HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Dr. V.S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC, in his presentation highlighted salient features of the existing SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV and AIDS (2006-2010) and reported on review of the strategy, its implementation by SAARC Secretariat and SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and various other initiatives branching from the strategy.

Mr. Muhammad Ali Bhuiyan, Regional Programme Advisor (UNAIDS), made a detailed presentation and informed the Meeting on the current epidemic, global commitments and responses in South Asia.

Ms. Nashida Sattar, Programme Specialist, HIV/AIDS (UNDP, Asia Pacific Office, Bangkok) made a presentation on Gender and Human Rights based approaches and emerging global and regional priorities.

Ms. Rachel Odede, Regional Advisor, HIV/AIDS made a comprehensive presentation on Children affected by HIV/AIDS.

In her presentation, Dr. Ritu Mahendru, Consultant contracted for formulation of the strategy, elaborated on draft of strategy, vision, mission, goals, objectives, methodology adopted and key priorities reflected in the strategy.

After the presentations the group work session started and identified the following Thematic Areas for the group discussion:

i. Prevention - Enabling Policies & Advocacy, Supportive Laws and Advancement of Human Rights in relation to HIV/AIDS - (Group – 1)
ii. Treatment, Care & Support - Mobilizing Resources - (Group – 2)
iii. M & E (Strategic Information) - (Group – 3)

Recommendations

1. Based on detail discussions on the Thematic Areas in the groups and after exhaustive deliberations in the plenary session, the meeting identified strategic directions for the SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2012-2016).
2. The participants after detailed deliberations agreed on the Vision and Goals and the strategic directions for the SAARC Regional HIV/AIDS strategy (2012-16).

3. It was decided that based on the recommendations of the meeting, the Consultant will finalize the draft by 13th July, 2012 and SAARC Secretariat will circulate the draft to the Member States by 1st August 2012. The Member States will send their feedback by 31st August, 2012. The consultant will collate the feedback of the Member States and finalize the draft to be presented to the Expert Group Meeting for adoption.

4. The Meeting welcomed the offer of Bhutan to host the next meeting of the Special Session of the Expert Group on HIV/AIDS in 2012.
3. **SAARC Regional Training on Research Methodology on Protocol Development for National Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Control Programme**

**Background**

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Kathmandu organized a seven-day training programme on Research Methodology for Protocol Development required for National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of SAARC Member States in Thimphu, Bhutan in collaboration with Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan from 7th to 13th August 2012.

**Objectives**

Following were the objectives of the training programme:

- To facilitate the SAARC Member States in the development of good quality of research protocols.
- To build their capacity in the field of research protocols
- To increase the capacity of Programme Managers of TB and HIV/AIDS and relevant staff of Member States
- To develop Research Protocols on identified areas of research on TB, HIV/AIDS & TB/HIV Co-infection

**Participation**

Participants from Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the training. List of the participants is placed at **ANNEX - III**
Opening Session

Mr. Tashi Dendup, Programme Manager NTP, Royal Government of Bhutan welcomed all the participants, resource persons and officials of STAC and Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan. Dr. Badri Thapa, Epidemiologist, STAC delivered the opening speech on behalf of Director, STAC. He highlighted the importance of research in today's world.

Dr. Dorji Wangchuk, Director General, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan delivered a welcome address. He welcomed all the participants and wished them a successful training. Mr. Nima Wangdi, Secretary Health, Royal Government of Bhutan graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He thanked STAC for choosing Bhutan as venue for this research training and wished for further collaboration between STAC and NTP, Bhutan. He further emphasized the role of research activities among Member States. At the end of the opening session vote of thanks was delivered by Mr. Namgay Tshering, Programme Manager, NACP, Royal Government of Bhutan.

A documentary was shown regarding STAC activities in the Region.

Methodology used in the training

- Lectures & PowerPoint Presentations with notes/handouts
- Participation of the audience
- Interactive discussion
- Group work
- Preparation presentation of protocol from participants

Technical Session

The technical session started with the presentation delivered by Dr. Naseem Khan Afridi, Epidemiologist, STAC on the objectives and methodologies that would be adopted during the research methodology training. Simultaneously, he delivered a presentation on “Introduction to Research Methodology” along with an overview regarding all the steps involved in the development of the research protocol.

Dr. Rajeswari Ramachandran and Dr. Santa Devi from TB Research Centre, Chennai, India gave a presentation on “How to Formulate Questions and the Problems Identification & Situation Analysis” along with the presentation on research objectives.

Epidemiologist, STAC then gave a presentation on study designs with elaboration on various types of study designs i.e., cohort, case control, cross sectional and experimental study designs. He also gave diagrammatic outline of these study designs and discussed strengths and weaknesses of each design.

The participants were then divided into five groups. They were asked to develop research questions in the topic of interest regarding TB and HIV/AIDS as per their national context.

The second day technical session was started with a quick recap of the previous day work/presentations. Ms. Gunjika Vishwanath Mishra, Technical Officer (NACO, India) summarized the topics.

Dr. Shanta Devi delivered her presentation on “Qualitative Research Methodology”. Dr. Badri Thapa, Microbiologist, STAC, delivered his presentations on “Literature Review and References”. He highlighted the need of literature review in formulating the protocol with use of End Note in referencing. His second presentation was on study variables needed in protocol development. He elaborated on quantitative and qualitative variables. The participants were practically demonstrated the entry of variables in computer software SPSS. Dr. Afridi then gave his presentation
on “Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Calculation. He gave a detailed presentation on probability and non-probability sampling. Dr. Shanta Devi and Dr. Rajeshwari then gave a presentation on “Pre-testing and Pilot-testing”.

The third day session started with presentation on data processing and analysis by Dr. Afridi, STAC. He explained about the different data analysis techniques, estimation of relative risk, odds ratio, frequency distribution and measures of central tendency. The participants were also demonstrated data analysis using SPSS. Dr. Thapa then delivered the presentation on “Financing and Budgeting”. In his presentation he elaborated on the key institutes that are interested in funding the research studies, he also presented an excel sheet for calculation of budget for the study. He explained the steps necessary for preparation of the budget for research protocol.

Dr. Rajeshwori then gave presentation on proposal writing. She elaborated on different steps that are necessary for proposal writing. Dr. Shanta also gave a presentation on data collection tools. She explained about the types of questions used in the study i.e., close ended, open ended and mix types. She also elaborated on how to use data collection tools in different studies. The participants were asked to do group work on their protocols. The group work continued on finalization of background and research objectives. The groups were provided soft copy on the outline of protocol and were asked to complete their work in the outline. The group work was facilitated by the resource persons and officials from STAC.

The fourth day session started with presentation on Ethical Issues in Research Studies by Dr. Rajeshwori. She explained the different issues related to ethics in health research. Background of ethics in research was presented, and then the need of approval from ethical committees was explained. Informed consent needed to be taken from the participants or patients was also elaborated. She then gave presentation regarding Monitoring in Research Studies. Dr. Shanta then gave her presentation on dissemination of Research Findings. She explained that it is very essential that findings should be disseminated to the concerned audience. The findings should be applicable and put in policy and planning of the projects. The findings need to be beneficial to the community at large. She also stressed on the role of media in dissemination of research findings. The findings can be disseminated through publication of the study in national and international indexed journals. After the presentations the group work began and each group started on their assigned research topics.

The fifth day session was started with the group work of participants developing their protocols on the assigned topics. Each group concentrated on their research question, the objectives that were to be achieved through conduction of study. The methodology including study design, duration, study participants, place of study were discussed in detail together with variables, inclusion, exclusion criteria. Special attention was paid on data collection tools, data management and analysis. The participants were also facilitated regarding different sampling techniques that would be used during conduction of the study. Each group was facilitated by resource persons and officials from the STAC on the development of research protocols.

The sixth day session was started with the group work continued and the participants concentrated to develop protocols on their areas of research interest. They worked on the development of work plan to distribute the research activities according to time line for their research study completion. They also developed questionnaire for their study protocols. And budget was also prepared and divided among various sub heads.

A study tour was organized to see the facilities provided at district hospital Punakha. The team observed the various wards and facilities provided to patients.

In the seventh day session participants finalized their research protocols as follows:

Dr. Amitav Das from India presented a presentation on “A study on the factors responsible for drop out of TB suspects referred by ICTCs to DMCs in Orissa state, India”.
Dr. Shalindera Bhatnagar from India presented a presentation on “Factors associated with low detection of new sputum smear negative pulmonary tuberculosis patients under RNTCP India”.

Dr. Shailesh Shrestha from Nepal presented a presentation on “Household infection control practices - level of the knowledge, attitude and practice among MDR- TB patients under treatment at a central regional treatment center, Nepal”.

Mr. Tashi Dendup from Bhutan presented a presentation on “Is there an over diagnosis of Extra Pulmonary TB in Bhutan”?

Mr. Lekey Khandu from Bhutan presented a presentation on “The research topic, prevalence and the factors contributing to HIV/AIDS in MARPs in Bhutan”.

Dr. Amal Perera from Sri Lanka gave his presentation on, “Optimal utilization of VCT centers by MARPs in Colombo district, Sri Lanka”.

Dr. Saman Kapilawansa from Sri Lanka delivered his presentation on “Is TB on rise among young population in Sri Lanka”.

The resource persons and the officials from STAC gave their feedback on all the presentations and facilitated the participants in modifications of their research protocols.

**Closing Session**

The closing session was conducted and Dr. Dorji Wangchuk, Director General Department of Public Health Ministry of Health Royal Government of Bhutan, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The participant from Bhutan as well as from India on behalf of all the participants thanked the STAC for conducting this training workshop which has enhanced their understanding of research methodology on protocol development. The resource persons from Bhutan and WHO in their remarks thanked the participants for their hard work in preparation of the protocols and thanked the STAC and host country for organizing this training. The Director General in his speech thanked all the participants, resource persons and officials from STAC for their relentless efforts in conduction and making this training a success and extended his good wishes to the participants for their safe journey home back. He then distributed the Certificates among the participants and resource persons. Dr. Afridi from STAC delivered vote of thanks on behalf of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Center, Kathmandu, Nepal.

**Outcomes**

This activity enhanced the capacity of National TB and HIV/AIDS control programs in developing good quality of research protocols for funding from donor agencies. Moreover, the eight protocols were developed on sound scientific lines that would be able to compete for approval as well as later on in publication in index journals.
4. SAARC Regional Expert Group Meeting of TB Programme Managers

Background

In compliance of the decision of the 21st Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC, the SAARC Regional Expert Group Meeting of TB Programme Managers to finalize the draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the Elimination/Control of Tuberculosis was held on 6-7 December, 2012, Kathmandu.

Objective

The objective of the meeting was to finalize the draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the Elimination/Control of Tuberculosis.

Participation

The Meeting was attended by the delegates from Government of Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri-Lanka. The List of Participants is placed at Annex-IV

Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the representative of the Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat. In his opening remarks Mr. Zuhuree conveyed the Secretary-General’s compliments for successful meeting. He mentioned that the declaration of last SAARC Summit specially encourages for implementation of the decisions.
Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre delivered the welcome remarks. He mentioned that this is time to move beyond DOTS and initiate the process with vision to eliminate the TB from the Region. The Meeting was chaired by Dr. Sudath Samaranawera, Acting Director, National Programme for TB Control and Chest Diseases, Government of Sri Lanka.

**Presentations**

On the behalf of STAC, Dr. Nassem Khan Afridi, Epidemiologist made a presentation to give the participants an introduction of the Centre along with its vision, mission, goal & objectives and situation of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region.

Presentations from the Member Countries were made by the leaders of delegations Mr. Chewang Rinzin, Dr. Niraj Kulshrestha, Ms. Maimoon Aboobakur, and Dr. Sudath Samaranawera from Government of Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka, respectively.

Dr. S. D. Gupta (Consultant), Director, Institute of Health Management and Research Centre, Jaipur, India, presented the draft strategy in the meeting. He mentioned that the draft of the strategy has been made after detail analysis of the existing NTP policies, strategies and achievements of National TB Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States. He also appreciated the decision of the SAARC mechanisms to bring this important strategy. This is the high time to initiate for setting of the NTPs activities with vision to control/Elimination of Tuberculosis.

The Meeting accepted the draft strategy document for the approval by the competent SAARC bodies after detail discussion and consensus on various aspects of the strategy and its importance.

**Recommendations**

The meeting made the following recommendations:

1. Expert Group recommended that this strategy after due approval by the competent authority of SAARC will be implemented in the SAARC Member States.
2. This strategy is proposed till 2017, however, in view of the forthcoming advances in diagnostics and treatment of Tuberculosis, the strategy will be reviewed at the end of 2015.

**Closing**

On behalf of all the delegations, Ms. Maimoon Aboobakur, Director, Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives, delivered the concluding remarks. She conveyed appreciations to the STAC for the hospitality extended and for making arrangements for the Meeting. She commended the Chairperson for the efficient manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Meeting to a successful conclusion. She also appreciated the valuable contributions of the delegations and Consultant made during the Meeting and thanked the Director, STAC for facilitating the deliberations of the Meetings. Thanking all the participants and officials the Chairperson declared the Meeting closed.
5. Preparation of draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the Control/Elimination of Tuberculosis in the Region (by hiring a Consultant)

Dr. S. D. Gupta, Director, IHMR, India prepared a draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the Control/Elimination of Tuberculosis in the Region as a short term consultant. Dr. Gupta is a public health expert with a distinguished academic and research career. He has published several research papers and reports. He has been associated in various capacities with several National and International research and academic organizations.

The draft strategy was discussed in detailed in the SAARC Regional Expert Group Meeting of TB Programme Managers held in Kathmandu from 6th to 7th Dec. 2012 (see above report, mentioned in No. 4).

6. Research/Studies

In this year STAC had planned to carry out 5 research activities in different aspects of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Member States. Among them, the following two research/studies are under process of completion:

6.1. The pharmacovigilance study on FDCs (Anti-TB drugs) in Sri Lanka

The objectives of the study were to detect adverse reaction associated with Anti-tuberculous Medicines (ATBM) early and systematically of patients on anti-TB treatment, to develop a database to store and retrieve data related to safety of ATBM, to determine safety in special circumstances e.g. diabetes, pregnancy, known allergies, HIV/AIDS, to identify signals of previously unidentified adverse reactions to medicine, to identify factors that are likely to affect adherence to treatment, to make recommendations to the relevant authorities for mitigation of adverse reactions associated with ATBM and to develop a sustainable plan to continue pharmacovigilance of ATBM in Sri Lanka.

To meet the above mentioned objective the National Programme for Tuberculosis Control and Chest Disease (NPTCCD), Government of Sri Lanka is conducting this activity in close coordination with STAC.

6.2. HIV prevalence among TB patients by visiting National Tuberculosis Centre, Nepal and drug susceptibility pattern M. tuberculosis isolated from TB patients with or without HIV infection, Nepal

The objective of the study is to investigate the prevalence of HIV among TB cases visiting NTC, Nepal. The study has been carried out in National TB Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal. Before starting the study, an orientation workshop was organized in STAC for the staff involved in this study. In the workshop, the objective, research methodology and interactive discussion were held among the participants and laboratory experts working in STAC and NTC. The final report is under process of completion.
7. Ninth Round Proficiency Testing of NRLs in SAARC Member States

SAARC Regional TB Reference Laboratory supports National TB Reference Laboratories by coordinating and conducting many laboratory activities such as; quality assurance of sputum microscopy, culture and drug susceptibility testing, surveillance of drug resistance and TB-HIV co-infection and laboratory Bio-safety. The Ninth round proficiency testing of sputum microscopy for National TB Reference Laboratories is one of such kind.

The objective of the proficiency testing of NRLs is to implement an ongoing proficiency testing programme for sputum microscopy within the Network of National TB Reference Laboratories in SAARC Region.

The methods applied for 9th round

A panel of 10 slides (5 stained with Ziehl-Neelsen staining technique and 5 unstained smears) was prepared & validated at SAARC Regional TB Reference Laboratory according to WHO/IUATLD guidelines and sent to ten National TB Reference Laboratories of the region and were requested to examine the panel of slides by any two or more Laboratory staff, which is 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 Reference Laboratories.

Results of 9th round

The results revealed that three of the ten National TB Reference Laboratories reported minor errors (3 LFN and 1 QE) and achieved 90-95% score. Rest of the seven laboratories reported no error of any type and achieved 100% score.

Conclusions

It is concluded that the performance of majority of the Reference Laboratories was excellent and the participating laboratories showing minor errors were also satisfactory. It is hoped that all the National TB Reference laboratories will sustain their performance.

SAARC TB Reference Laboratory has conducted the QA activities as follows:

1. First Round in 2003
2. Second Round in 2004
3. Third Round 2005
4. Fourth Round 2007
5. Fifth Round 2008
6. Sixth Round 2009
7. Seventh Round 2010
8. Eighth Round 2011
8. Commemoration of World TB Day 2012

8.1. Partnership Programme with Journalists on Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis

SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and National TB Centre (NTC), Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal jointly organized a Partnership Programme with Journalists on Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis on 21st March 2012 at STAC, Thimi, Bhaktapur.

The objective of the programme was to enhance public awareness on TB and its prevention & control by making mass media aware on situation of TB and achievements of control programmes in Nepal & SAARC Member States.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC/NTC highlighted the objectives of the programme and appealed the participants to be part of the solution. He also highlighted that this programme was organized to strengthen media partnership on TB control. He explained the theme of the Day “Stop TB in my lifetime”.

A press release was also issued by STAC/NTC on this occasion.

Dr. S. C. Verma, Senior Consultant Chest Physician, NTC gave his presentation on “Status of TB Control in Nepal & its achievements”. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC gave a presentation on “Status of TB Control in SAARC Region”.


8.2. Joint Programme

A joint programme was organized as main activity on the occasion of World TB Day on 23rd March 2012 by Government of Nepal, NTP, STAC, WHO, NATA, BNMT and other different organizations working for control of TB in Nepal at Nepal Academy Hall, Kathmandu under the Chairmanship of Dr. Praveen Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Population, Government of Nepal. Mr. Rajendra Mahato, Hon’ble Minister for Health & Population graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director, SAARC Secretariat attended the programme as Representative
presentation on achievements of NTP of Nepal. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC made a presentation on Situation of Tuberculosis in the SAARC Region. Mr. D. B. Pradhan, President NATA, Dr. Lin Aung, WR Nepal, Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director, SAARC Secretariat gave their remarks. There was an announcement of extension of contract with Mr. Deepak Raj Giri and Ms. Deepa Shree Nirdala as Nepal’s TB Goodwill Ambassadors for the coming year.

A vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. S. C. Verma, Sr. Consultant Chest Physician, NTC, Nepal.

As Chairman of the programme, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Population, Government of Nepal delivered his remarks and declared the end of the joint programme.

Besides the joint programme the following additional activities have been carried out:-

**Releasing of Publications**


**Exhibitions**

An exhibition was jointly organized at the venue. In the exhibition introduction of STAC highlighting on awareness on TB along with status of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region were displayed. Acid Fast Bacilli (AFB) was also displayed in the teaching microscope. This exhibition was observed by the Chief Guest, Chairperson along with the other guests and all visitors of the function.

**Production and Distribution of Awareness Material**

STAC prepared T-shirts with the World TB Day 2012 theme and distributed to SAARC Regional Centres, National TB Control Programmes of Member States, SAARC Secretariat, WHO, NGOs/INGOs, UN Agencies and organizations working for TB control.
Publication of Messages

On this occasion of World TB Day, special messages from Rt. Hon’ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon’ble Minister of Health and Population, Hon’ble State Minister of Health and Population, Secretary of Ministry of Health and Population, His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Saleem, the Secretary-General, SAARC, Director General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and National TB Centre, Nepal were published in the Gorkhapatra (a National Daily of Nepal). The message from His Excellency, Secretary General was disseminated to all NTPs of Member States of SAARC for publication.

Publication of Articles

Articles on:

1. Early Diagnosis of Tuberculosis, Global Need
   - by Dr. B. Thapa, Dr. V. S. Salhotra and Dr. K. K. Jha

2. All Together Now
   - by Dr. N. K. Afridi, Dr. V. S. Salhotra and Dr. K. K. Jha of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre were published in the National dailies of Nepal on the occasion.

Commemoration of World TB Day 2012 in SAARC Member States:

The world TB Day 2012 has been commemorated in SAARC Member States as a main event to spread the awareness in general people regarding the knowledge on tuberculosis such as its diagnosis & treatment, available services and the preventive measures to be applied in case of dealing the people with pulmonary TB.

Theme of the day was “Getting to Zero: Zero new HIV infection: Zero discrimination: Zero AIDS related deaths” Theme of the World AIDS Day remains same from the year 2011 to 2015. The infection rate should be reduced into zero, no discrimination and no death by AIDS.

9.1. Awareness Programme on HIV/AIDS & TB for School Students and Teachers


STAC is organizing partnership programme with schools since 2000, when a pilot project completed with the best results. Overall objectives of this school partnership programme are set as follows:

- to make school (students, teachers and management staff) aware about HIV/AIDS & TB
- to build a cadre of child ambassadors through programme managers committed to spread messages on HIV/AIDS & TB and
- to convince the teachers and students to be part of solution to fight against HIV/AIDS/TB

This year on the occasion of World AIDS Day, STAC organized a partnership programme with Modern College of Management, located at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal with the objective to enhance awareness on HIV/AIDS and TB among school students and teachers. The programme was attended by over 50 students and teacher.

After registration of participants a 15 minutes documentary on “Introduction and Activities of STAC” was displayed for the information to the participants about the Centre and its activities.

The technical presentations were presented by the experts from STAC and NTC. Dr. N. K. Afridi, Epidemiologist,
STAC presented “General Information on HIV/AIDS Infection” where as Dr. Badri Thapa, Microbiologist, STAC presented “General Information on TB/HIV Co-infection”. Simultaneously, Mr. Sujit Kumar Sah, TB/HIV Co-ordination Officer, NTC, presented “Overview of National TB Control Programme of Nepal”.

The presentations were followed by discussions. Participating students raised different questions regarding HIV/AIDS and TB, its control strategy in Nepal as well as the available services such as treatment facilities, etc. in the country.

On behalf of participants Ms. Reshma Pyakurel, Teacher gave her remarks. She appreciated the programme and thanked the organizer for providing opportunity to participate in this important event which was very necessary to the students of class XI and XII.

At the conclusion students expressed their solidarity to works for prevention of HIV/AIDS by spreading messages regarding HIV/AIDS and TB to their friend circle, family members and community dwellers.

Participants were provided awareness & education materials on TB and HIV/AIDS prepared and published by STAC.

At the end of the programme the experts of the STAC highlighted the role of students and teachers in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and TB as well as urged the students to play the role of Child Ambassadors for spreading messages on HIV/AIDS and TB in the community.

9.2. Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2012 in SAARC Member States

World AIDS Day has been commemorated all over the SAARC Member States. STAC received a report from Bhutan in this regard.

Bhutan

“Getting to Zero”- Gearing towards elimination of Mother-to-child transmission

The World AIDS Day-2012 was observed in Thimphu at the Clock Tower Square on 1st December, 2012. The event was organized by Lhak-sam in collaboration with the National HIV/AIDS & STIs Control programme under Department of Public Health and the RENEW Secretariat. This year, the National theme for the event focused on to the elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, which defines the Zero New HIV Infection.

The event was graced by Honourable Zabtog Lyonpo, His Excellency Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba and was attended by the country representatives from UN system in Bhutan including WHO plus the heads of the governmental organizaitons. Hundreds of people witnessed the event and was further entertained by the performers from the
Happy Valley Edutainment firm. Onsite Voluntary, Counseling and Testing (VCT) were offered during the event and almost 180 blood samples were collected. RENEW and Lhak-sam also showcased their organizational mandates and their achievements through the posters presentation.

Honourable Zabtog Lyonpo in his opening statement highlighted the importance of undergoing HIV testing and urged the people to undergo HIV test. He also applauded the boldness in the members of Lhak-sam for their dedicated efforts to create awareness over last one year after giving the face to the disease in December, 2011. Honourable Lyonpo also congratulated the efforts by the Ministry of Health in containing the further spread of HIV in the country.

Hon’ble Secretary of Health, Dasho Nima Wangdi in his welcome address thanked the Honourble Chief Guest and the dignitaries for their valuable presence to participate in the event, despite being weekend holiday. The program concluded with vote of thanks by Dr. Dorji Wangchuk, Director General of the Department of Public Health.

As the highlight of the day the Honourable Chief Guest launched the book on the ‘Positive Living’ developed by the Ministry of Health in joint collaboration with the UNAIDS and the ‘Revised MSTF Manual-2012’ developed and revised by the National HIV/AIDS & STIs Control Programme under the Department of Public Health.

10. Celebration of SAARC Charter Day

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) was established in 1985 when its Charter was signed by the Heads of State or Government of seven south Asian countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Later, Afghanistan joined the association in 2007 as eighth member of SAARC.

SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) celebrated the 27th Anniversary of SAARC (SAARC Charter Day) by organizing a special programm on 7th December 2012 in Kathmandu. The programme was attended by the representatives from Government of Nepal, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Health Services, National Centre for AIDS and STD Control, National TB Centre, National Planning Commission etc. Simultaneously, Directors, SAARC Secretariat and SAARC Regional Centre (SIC), Representatives from Embassies, Federation of Nepal Journalists, International Journalists, UN agencies and different stakeholders attended the programme. Simultaneously, delegates of expert group meeting who were in meeting in Kathmandu for the finalization of the SAARC Regional Strategy on Elimination of TB from SAARC Member States, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka also joined the programme.

Dr. Praveen Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Dr. Mishra, in his remarks, welcomed the delegates from SAARC Member States and participants in
the programme and reiterated the commitments of the Government of Nepal regarding the support provided to the SAARC and appreciated the role played by STAC.

The programme was conducted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Niranjan Man Singh Basnyat, Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal. Dr. Basnyat thanked STAC for organizing such a programme where different personalities were gathered. He appreciated the progress of the STAC and informed the audience that all SAARC mandate will be reviewed within 2013. SAARC is on the way to implement the declarations rather to add more declarations in future. He reiterated the commitment of the Government of Nepal towards the continue support to Regional Centres of SAARC.

The Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre welcomed the delegates and participants. He congratulated to all people working for SAARC on the occasion of 27th Anniversary of SAARC and thanked Government of Member States, delegates and SAARC Secretariat for their continue support and guidance for implementation of the activities of STAC.

Dr. Niraj Kulshrestha, Additional Deputy Director General, Directorate General of Health Services, Government of India, on behalf of delegates gave his remarks. Dr. Kulshrestha expressed his satisfaction on the outcome of two days meeting for finalization of draft of strategy for elimination of Tuberculosis.

Mr. Laxmi Bilas Koirala, Director, SAARC Information Centre (SIC) also gave his remarks.

Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu delivered vote of thanks. He highlighted the role of SAARC for development of the people of the Region and also explained the SAARC Charter Day as an opportunity to reflect its objectives and commitments towards the people of the Region and express his satisfaction on the successful completion & fruitful outcome of two days meeting on development of the draft of the strategy. He thanked Dr. Praveen Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, all dignitaries on dais, delegates, guest and invitees

11. Conferment of SAARC Prize on HIV/AIDS

As per the decision of 22nd meeting of the Governing Board of STAC, held on 11-12 October, 2012, Mr. Tshewang Nidup of Bhutan has been awarded by **SAARC Prize on HIV/AIDS 2012** in recognition of his remarkable contribution for creating awareness on HIV/AIDS in Bhutan. The prize consist cash prize of US$ 2,000.00 along with letter of appreciation.

Considering the existing guidelines on the SAARC Prizes under the SAARC Regional Centres, the 21st Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC recommended for conferment of SAARC Prize on TB and HIV/AIDS alternatively each year. The Board recommended SAARC Prize on HIV/AIDS for the year 2012.

The aim of the prize is to honour citizen/s or organizations of South Asia for their exemplary work towards control and prevention of HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region with the following objectives:

- to encourage individuals and organizations based in South Asia to undertake programmes and activities complementing and supplementing the efforts on HIV/AIDS Control
- to honour outstanding contributions and achievements of individuals and organizations of the Region in the fields of HIV/AIDS and
- to recognize any other outstanding achievements, not covered above, of individuals and organizations in the Region whose work or contribution has benefited or inspired the country as well as the Region.
12. STAC Publications

STAC published the following publications in 2012:

STAC Newsletters (Vol. XXII No. 1 and 2)
SAARC Epidemiological Yearly Reports on TB and HIV/AIDS
SAARC Regional Strategy on ACSM for TB & HIV/AIDS
Annual Report of STAC 2011
Diagnosis and Treatment facilities in SAARC Member States
Ninth Round Proficiency Testing of Sputum Smear Microscopy for National TB Reference Laboratories in SAARC Region
Wall Calendar 2013

13. Distribution of STAC publications, related documents and other materials

Publications, documents and related materials have been distributed through postal services. Almost new publications are uploaded on STAC websites in pdf file format, which can be downloaded and printed as per need.

STAC publishes official peer reviewed journal of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre twice in a year. The Journal’s main aim is the continuing education of personnel and the dissemination of the most up-to-date information in the field of tuberculosis, lung diseases and HIV/AIDS. It is devoted to dissemination of knowledge concerning various aspects of tuberculosis, lung diseases and HIV/AIDS. All articles relevant to the practice of this Journal and quality health research are published. The Journal is an appropriate forum for the publication of articles concerning the social, economic, public health, epidemiology, diagnostics, genetics etc. in the area of tuberculosis, lung diseases and HIV/AIDS. The scientific manuscripts presenting the results of public health importance are encouraged. The novel case reports which adds to the existing knowledge and consistent with the scope of Journal will be considered for publication.

In the year 2012, Vol. IX No. 1 & 2 have been published and distributed. All articles published in this Journal have been reviewed/re-reviewed by peer reviewers. The articles published in two issues of the journal were as follows:

1. Adherence of the NTP to DOTS recommended defaulters tracing mechanism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
2. BPKIHS TB module: an innovative way to teach tuberculosis to medical undergraduates
3. Simple and rapid liquid chromatography method for simultaneous determination of Isoniazid and Pyrazinamide in plasma
4. Asthma in young and elderly: the differences
5. What do they know about HIV/AIDS – adolescents and young adults from slums in Mumbai, India
6. Knowledge on HIV/AIDS amongst bus drivers of Duhlikhel, Nepal
7. Pulmonary Hydatid Cyst – a radiological challenge
8. High HIV prevalence among low income and laborers in the district of Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India
9. Evaluation of Nitrate Reductase Assay for rapid detection of drug resistant tuberculosis
10. Knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among pregnant females attending antenatal clinic at Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar, Pakistan
11. Tuberculosis or Melioidosis? - Look twice in South-western Coastal India
12. Patient characteristics associated with non-adherence to anti tuberculosis treatment in Sri Lanka
13. Simple and rapid liquid chromatography method for determination of Rifabutin in plasma
14. Excess of plasma cells with pseudo-gaucher cells in a case of tuberculosis – a case report
15. Limited Wegener’s Granulomatosis as a solitary pulmonary nodule - a case report
16. Non-hodgkin’s lymphoma presenting as a primary endobronchial tumor- a case report
15. Dissemination of information of TB & HIV/AIDS by updating website

www.saarctb.org is the official website of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre. On this website recent information of TB & HIV/AIDS, informative articles, news and announcement of the Centre, STAC publications, information related to SAARC Regional Centres etc. are being published. Periodical and timely update for the purpose of giving information has been initiated. Timely modification of the layout of home page has been done to make the website more user-friendly and quick access. Online submission system of articles/manuscripts for STAC Journal can be done through this website.

16. Procurement of chemicals and other lab materials for regular works at SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Reference Laboratory at STAC

As per the need of the laboratory, chemicals and required materials have been procured.

17. Purchase/subscription of books and journals for STAC Library

STAC Library has been established as a Regional Resource Centre for TB and HIV/AIDS. It acquires medical books, journals, reports and dissertation and other publication related to TB and HIV/AIDS. It also acquires books and newspapers for general reading. All the documents are classified, cataloged, indexed and arranged according to National Library of Medicine Classification (NLMC) and Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme.

The Centre regularly subscribes National, International Journals on TB and HIV/AIDS. An audio visual section is developed for the use of audio visual materials. The library uses softlink alice software to automate all its recourses and update of STAC website is also one of the component of Resource Centre of STAC. For the detailed information about TB, HIV/AIDS and the Centre, interested people can visit the official website of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre – www.saarctb.org

(Inside view of the STAC Library located at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal)
18. Presentation & dissemination of research findings on TB & HIV/AIDS through participation in International Conferences

**XIX International AIDS Conference 2012**

The Director of STAC participated in XIX International AIDS Conference 2012 held in Washington DC, USA from 22nd to 27th July 2012, organized by International AIDS Society (IAS). The participation of the Centre is taken as an opportunity for disseminating of findings of research conducted by the Centre in the SAARC Member States and forging further networking with international organizations of repute.

The International AIDS Conference is the premier gathering for those working in the field of HIV/AIDS, as well as policy makers, persons living with HIV and other individuals committed to ending the pandemic. It is a chance to assess where we are, evaluate recent scientific developments and lessons learnt, and collectively chart a course forward.

**43rd Union World Conference on Lung Health**

A 5-day conference covering the latest developments, opportunities and challenges in tuberculosis, HIV, tobacco control, lung health and non-communicable diseases was organized by International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 13 to 17 November 2012. Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC participated in the Conference without financial liability to STAC.

19. Participation in Regional Conferences/meetings/ in Member States

**Meeting of the SAARC Health Ministers preceded by the Senior Officials (Health Secretariat) Meeting, Maldives 10-12 April, 2012**

H. E. Mr. Ahmed Saleem, Secretary General, SAARC addressed the Inaugural Session of the Fourth Meeting of Health Ministers convened in Maldives on 12th April 2012. The Meeting brought together the Health Ministers and high-level delegations from SAARC Member States to discuss strategies to improve the public health in the region. The meeting was inaugurated by the H. E. Dr. Mohamed Waheed, President of the Republic of Maldives in the presence of the visiting Ministers and delegations from Member States. Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director and Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director attended the Meeting from STAC.
Meeting of the SEA Regional Technical Working Group (TWG)

Dr. Naseem Khan Afridi, Epidemiologist, STAC attended the Meeting of SEA Regional Technical Working Group (TWG) on TB organized by WHO/SEARO in New Delhi, India held from 11th to 13th April 2012. The meeting was attended by participants from different organizations such as WHO/SEARO, IMA, STAC, NTP Thailand, NTP Myanmar, TRC India, NTI India, IUTALD India, KNCV Indonesia etc. The overall objective of the meeting was to provide clear guidance on new policies and strategies for TB control interventions in the countries of the region.

Workshop on Country Capacity Building on WHO Collaborating Centres

STAC participated in Workshop on Country Building on WHO Collaborating Centres (WHO CCs) organized by WHO/SEARO on 24 April 2012 organized at WHO Meeting Room, UN Building, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal. In this workshop the policy, rules, regulations and procedures regarding WHO CCs were discussed.

Meeting of Directors of SAARC Regional Centres in Kathmandu

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC participated in the meeting of the Directors of SAARC Regional Centres held at the Secretariat in Kathmandu on 30-31 July 2012. All the Regional Centres were represented at the meeting that was convened by H. E. Mr. Ahmed Saleem, Secretary-General of SAARC, in keeping with the mandate of the National Focal Points of SAARC Member States, who last met in Paro, Bhutan, on 23-24 May 2012.

The meeting was opened by the Secretary-General and was chaired by Mr. Tareque Muhammad, Director, SAARC Secretariat. In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General said, “Over twenty-six years of SAARC’s existence, we went on creating mechanisms after mechanisms and one Regional Centre after another, but we could never devote time to examine the efficacy of these mechanisms and entities in a holistic manner. Although over the years, efforts were made to strengthen SAARC and its mechanisms time and again with the institution of a Group of Eminent Persons and holding of special sessions of the Standing Committee, a comprehensive exercise was still needed to make SAARC mechanisms and entities more efficient and effective.”

Following in-depth discussions, the two-day Meeting of Directors came up with an exhaustive list of recommendations on strengthening Regional Centres.

Meeting with CARE Nepal

CARE Nepal, Pulchowk, Lalitpur invited STAC to participate in a meeting held at Teku, Kathmandu on 5th Sept. 2012. On behalf of the Centre Dr. N. K. Afridi, Epidemiologist attended the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to share documentaries and photo stories with stakeholders at central level. CARE Nepal is working in close cooperation with National Centre for AIDS and STI Control (NCASC), HIV and STI Board etc. in Nepal.

Regional Workshop on Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant Tuberculosis, Chiang Mai, Thailand

WHO/SEARO invited Director of the STAC to participate in the Regional Workshop on Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant Tuberculosis, Chiang Mai, Thailand from 17th to 21st Sept. 2012 in the capacity of Temporary Advisor to the Regional Director, accordingly, Dr. K. K. Jha participated in the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to improve the management of Drug Resistant TB cases under NTPs.
ASTICON 2012

The Epidemiologist and the Microbiologist, STAC participated in ASTICON 2012 - the 36th National Conference of Indian Association for the Study of Sexually Transmitted Diseases & AIDS (IASSTD & AIDS), organized by Sree Narayana Institute of Medical Sciences and Gurudeva Charitable Trust, Kerala, India from 2nd to 4th November 2012.

A poster on “HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region and Efforts to contain It” and scientific paper on “Emergence of Drug Resistance Tuberculosis: Threat to TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme” were presented with view to provide the information on the SAARC Regional efforts rendered by STAC in the field of HIV/AIDS as well as the information on emergence of drug resistant TB to the participants of the conference.

20. Additional activities carried out by STAC in 2012:

20.1. Inauguration of Building of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre

Hon’ble Minister for Health and Population, Government of Nepal Mr. Rajendra Mahato, inaugurated the new building of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal on 2nd February 2012. The inaugural function was chaired by the Hon’ble State Minister for Health & Population, Government of Nepal, Mr. Saroj Kumar Yadav. Hon’ble Member of Parliament & former Minister for Health and Population, Government of Nepal Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel and Prof. Shiv Kumar Rai, Hon’ble Member, National Planning Commission, Nepal attended the function as Guests of Honour. The foundation of building was laid down by the then Hon’ble Minister for Health & Population Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel on 28th November 2008.

Hon’ble Minister along with other dignitaries observed the facilities available at the new building.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre and National TB Centre delivered the welcome address. He highlighted the aims and objectives of the Centre along with its achievements. He also informed that the progress of TB and HIV/AIDS control in the SAARC Region and also highlighted the services available in the
new building. A 15 minute documentary on the establishment of SAARC and STAC along with its activities prepared by STAC was released by the Chief Guest and projected at the programme.

The remarks were delivered by Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Representative, SAARC Secretariat, Mr. Ganesh Dhakal, Representative, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal, Dr. Praveen Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal, Hon’ble Member, National Planning Commission, Nepal, Prof. Shiv Kumar Rai, Hon’ble Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel, MP & former Minister for Health Population, Government of Nepal. Mr. Ahmar Ismail, Charge d’Affaires, Embassy of Pakistan, Kathmandu and H. E. Dr. Neem Chandra Bhowmik, Ambassador, Embassy of Bangladesh, Kathmandu.

The Chief Guest in his remarks highlighted that the Government of Nepal has given top priority to TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes in Nepal as well as in the SAARC Region. He also reiterated the commitments of the Government of Nepal for further support for remaining work of the new building.

Hon’ble State Minister for Health and Population, Government of Nepal Mr. Saroj Kumar Yadav delivered his remarks as Chairperson.

Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre delivered vote of thanks.

Dr. Badri Thapa, Microbiologist, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre conducted the programme as Master of Ceremony.

Before inaugurating the STAC building, Hon’ble Minister for Health and Population also inaugurated Gene Xpert MTB/RIF Machine installed at National TB Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur.
20.2. Visit of STAC by Dignitaries

Visit of His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Saleem, Secretary General, SAARC to STAC

His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Saleem, Secretary General of SAARC visited SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur on 5th July 2012. Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director, SAARC Secretariat also accompanied in the visit. H. E. observed the facilities of the Centre by visiting all sections of the Centre and expressed his satisfaction. He thanked the STAC staff and gave instructions/guidance for further development of the Centre. He also thanked Government of Nepal for new infrastructure provided to the STAC.

Visit of SDF Team

A team consisting of Mr. Karma, Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sunil Motiwal, Director and Mr. Philip Baidya, Assistant Director (Project Management) from SAARC Development Fund Secretariat, Thimphu, Bhutan visited STAC on May 16, 2012. The team observed the functioning of the Centre and expressed their satisfaction on the support rendered by the Centre to SAARC Member States regarding control of TB and prevention of HIV/AIDS. The team rendered the commitment for required support and coordination to the Centre.
Visit of CARE Nepal

Ms. Orianne BOYER, EMPHASIS Project Director, CARE Nepal, Kathmandu visited STAC on different dates of January, February and April 2012, to discuss about the HIV & migrants. She discussed on the possibility of collaboration between CARE Nepal and STAC in cross-border issues related to HIV/AIDS.

Visit of WHO/SEARO

Dr. Jigmi Singay, Regional Advisor, Department of Communicable Diseases, WHO/SEARO visited STAC on 24th April 2012. Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC briefed about the activities of STAC and discussed on different issues regarding TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Member States. The purpose of visit was to discuss on the activities of NTP and further cooperation and coordination to NTP Nepal and STAC.

Visit of UNAIDS

Dr. Ma. Elena G. Filio – Borromeo (Marlyn), UNAIDS Country Co-ordinator for Nepal visited STAC on 26th June 2012. She discussed with the Director and Senior Officials of STAC on different issues on prevention of HIV/AIDS in the Region.
21. Audit of STAC for the year 2011

A Joint Audit Team for the year 2011 (JAT 2011) comprising auditors CA, Bhava Nath Dahal, Director, Office of the Auditor General of Nepal and Muuthasim Ahmed Saeed, Manager, Financial Audit, Auditor General’s Office, Maldives carried out the audit of the accounts and related activities of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre for the year 2011, from 11 to 12 June 2012.

The following activities could not be carried out in the year 2012:

1. SAARC Regional Training on Tuberculosis Infection Control
2. Experience sharing by Regional Experts through observation of National TB Control programme implementation and best practices, Bangladesh
3. Experience sharing by Regional Experts through observation of the National HIV/AIDS control Programme implementation and best practice, India
4. SAARC Training on Management Information for Action (MIFA) on TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes
5. The SAARC Regional Meeting of Managers of National TB Control Programmes for Programme review and Management of Cross Border issues
7. The SAARC Regional Meeting of Managers of National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes for Programme review
9. Programmes for SAARC Goodwill Ambassador/s for HIV/AIDS
10. Meetings with Collaborating Institutions for Strengthening Networking – WHO / UNAIDS / UNFPA & other collaborating Institutes

Research

12. Genotyping of Multi-drug Resistant Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Strains in SAARC Region at STAC
13. Study to determine the causes related to sub-optimal participation of private practitioners in National TB Program in Nepal
14. Study of factors associated with development of MDR in TB patients on DOTS-Bhutan
22. STAC’s activities in SAARC Member States

The objective of STAC is to work for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National TB Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States.

1. SAARC Regional TB Reference Laboratory and Lab Network

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre identified ten Tuberculosis Laboratories in Member States as National TB Reference Laboratories. Subsequently, SAARC Regional TB Reference Laboratory has been setup and networking with National TB laboratories and Reference laboratories have been developed. Activities under Laboratory Network have been initiated in the Region. Currently STAC is under process to scale up SAARC Regional TB Reference laboratory at STAC as Supra-regional TB Reference Laboratory for the Region.

2. Human Resource Development

Trained manpower is one of the essential components for a successful TB control programme in the Member States. To develop trained manpower or upgrade the skills of the staffs, STAC organized different training activities to support NTPs of Member States such as, Training of Trainers (ToT) on TB Control Management and Management of Drug Resistant TB (DOTS Plus), Training on TB Bacteriology/culture/DST, Training on Strengthening IEC Activities on TB & HIV/AIDS, Training on Data Management Skills in TB and HIV/AIDS Control, Epidemiological Training for TB and HIV/AIDS, TB Lab Management Course, Leadership and Strategic Management Training for TB and HIV/AIDS, Training on Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) etc. The following are the title of trainings organized by STAC in association with the Member States:

2.1. Training Programme for Trainers in Tuberculosis Control Programme

1. Training Programme for Trainers in Tuberculosis Control programme, 1994, Kathmandu, Nepal
2. Training Programme for Trainers in Tuberculosis Control programme in SAARC Countries, 1995 Kathmandu, Nepal
3. Training programme for Regional/ District TB programme Coordinators in SAARC Member Countries, 1996 Kathmandu, Nepal
4. Training programme for Strengthening IEC Activities with Special Emphasis on TB & HIV, Feb. 1998, New Delhi, India
5. Training of Trainers for Tuberculosis Programme Managers in SAARC Countries, 1998, Male, Maldives
7. SAARC Trainers Training Course for TB Control Programme Managers, June 2000, Thimphu, Bhutan
8. SAARC Trainers Training on TB Control programme management, National TB Institute, Dec. 2001, Bangalore, India
9. SAARC Trainers Training on TB Control programme Management, December 2002, Colombo, Sri-Lanka
10. SAARC Trainers Training on Tuberculosis Control Programme Management 2003, Islamabad, Pakistan
11. SAARC Trainers Training on Tuberculosis Control programme Management May 2004, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
12. SAARC Trainer’s of Training on TB Control Programme Management, Dec. 2005, Islamabad, Pakistan
13. SAARC Regional Training for Operational Research, August, 2009, Jaipur, India
2.2. Training Programme on Laboratory Aspects


ii. Training Programme for Laboratory Technicians on Tuberculosis Bacteriology from SAARC Countries, April 1996, NTI Bangalore, India

iii. SAARC Tuberculosis Laboratory Management Course, Under SAARC-Canada Regional TB and HIV/AIDS Project (Based on WHO/IUATLD Training Modules, 2003), December 2003, Kathmandu, Nepal

iv. SAARC Regional Training for Trainers (TOT) on Quality Assurance in Sputum Microscopy, June 2006, Paro, Bhutan

v. SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologist for Sputum Culture/Sensitivity, July 2008, NTI, Bangalore, India

vi. SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologist for Sputum Culture/Sensitivity, Aug 2009, NTI, Bangalore, India

vii. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers (Microbiologist) on culture and DST of Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, Bangalore, India, June, 2010

viii. SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologists for Sputum Culture and Drug Susceptibility Test for Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, Sept. 2011, Bangalore, India

ix. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers on Culture and Drug Susceptibility Test for Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, May 2012, Bangalore, India

2.3. Training in Data Management & Epidemiology

i. SAARC Training for Regional/District Level TB Programme Managers to strengthen their Skills in Data management, Dec. 2002- 9 Jan. 2003 Kathmandu, Nepal

ii. SAARC Regional training on Epidemiology and Integration of Gender Issue in Epidemiological Report, Oct.2003, Kathmandu, Nepal

iii. SAARC Training on Data Management of TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes, July 2005, Kathmandu, Nepal

iv. SAARC Regional Training on Computer based Data Management Applications for TB and HIV/AIDS Data Managers, October 2006, Islamabad, Pakistan

v. SAARC Regional Training on Data Management, November, 2009 Colombo, Sri-Lanka

vi. SAARC Training on Computer-based Data Management on TB & HIV/AIDS, April 2011, Kathmandu, Nepal

2.4. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers on DOTS-PLUS

i. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers on DOTS PLUS, May 2006, Kathmandu, Nepal

ii. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers on Management of Drug Resistant TB (DOTS Plus) Nov. 2007, Sri Lanka

iii. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers (TOT) on Essential Technical & Operational Aspects of DOTS PLUS, July 2008, Kathmandu, Nepal

iv. SAARC Training of Trainers on Management of MDR-TB patients for National, Provincial & District level Managers of National Tuberculosis Programme, Bangladesh, May 2010, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2.5. SAARC Training on Leadership and Strategic Management

i. SAARC Regional Training on Leadership & Strategic Management in TB & HIV/AIDS, September 2006, Bangalore, India

ii. SAARC Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for National and Regional Level TB and HIV/AIDS Programme Managers, June 2009 Dhaka, Bangladesh

iii. SAARC Training of Trainers on Leadership & Strategic Management for National, Regional & District, Level Managers of National Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control programme, April 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

iv. SAARC Regional Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for National/Regional level TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Programme Managers in Maldives, August 2010, Male, Maldives


vi. SAARC Regional Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for National/Regional level TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Programme Managers, November 2011, Jaipur, India

2.6. SAARC Training on Anti-Retro Viral Therapy

i. SAARC Training on Technical and Operational Aspects of Anti Retro Viral Therapy, August 2008, Colombo, Sri Lanka

ii. SAARC Training on Technical and Operational Aspects of Anti Retro Viral Therapy, November 2008, Dhaka, Bangladesh

3. Establishment of Epidemiological Network

Since its establishment the Centre has been collecting TB related data and preparing regional data in order to have quality regional reports on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection. Regional Epidemiological Networking has been developed in 2003. Since 2003 the Center has been producing yearly Epidemiological Report (Update) on TB and HIV/AIDS in separate volume.

4. Development of Regional Strategies

**SAARC Regional Strategies for TB/HIV Co-infection**

The STAC has developed the SAARC Regional Strategy for TB/HIV Co-infection in 2003. This was endorsed by the Twelfth SAARC Summit for implementation. The action plan for implementation was developed in 2004. The revised SAARC Regional Strategy on TB/HIV Co-infection (2011 – 2015) has been published and in the process if implementation.

**SAARC Regional Strategies on HIV/AIDS**

On the directive of 12th SAARC Summit SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS has been developed in 2005 under the UNAIDS support to SAARC. This strategy has been revised as SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS and draft has already been prepared and under the process of completion.
SAARC Regional Strategy on TB control

Draft of the SAARC Regional Strategy for the Elimination/Control of TB has bee finalized by the meeting of SAARC Regional Experts held in Kathmandu on Dec. 2012.

5. Research and study activities

STAC has been supporting Member States for conducting different research activities in relation to TB and HIV/AIDS with the development of research protocols on priority areas of studies.

6. Support in NTP Review of SAARC Member States

On the request of SAARC Member States, STAC is participating for NTP review.

7. Partnership Programme for TB and HIV/AIDS control with Schools, Media, Medical/Nursing Colleges, Private Practitioners, Pharmacists, Manpower Agency, Travel Agency and Industry

STAC has been supplementing SAARC Member States in their efforts by taking initiative to develop partnership and/or strengthening partnership with various stakeholders for TB and HIV/AIDS control. The Guidelines for the Partnership Programmes have been developed and distributed.

8. Advocacy and Awareness

STAC has been organizing awareness and advocacy programmes on occasion of World TB Day/SAARC TB Day and SAARC Charter Day since its establishment. Since 2004 the Centre has also been organizing separate awareness programme on the occasion of World AIDS Day.

9. Programme of SAARC Goodwill Ambassadors for HIV/AIDS

SAARC Goodwill Ambassadors for HIV/AIDS programme has been initiated since 2009. Ms. Shabana Azmi, India visited Nepal for the implementation of the programme as mentioned in the SAARC HIV/AIDS Strategy. Now, the second nomination of SAARC Goodwill Ambassadors has been completed, in which Ms. Runa Laila, Bangladesh, Mr. Ajay Devgan, India and Ms. Ms. Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy (Pakistan) are nominated by the SAARC body.


For the development of common Protocols, Policies, Strategies, Plan and Guidelines, solution of common issues, STAC has been organizing various Seminars, Workshops and Meetings

11. Sharing Experiences and Expertise

Besides organizing workshops, seminars, meetings and visits for sharing expertise and experiences, STAC organized first Regional Conference in 2004 on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases in Kathmandu, Nepal. Around 600 participants from Member States and other countries participated in the conference. STAC also organized SAARC Second Conference in 2008 on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases in Kathmandu, Nepal. More than 800 participants from Member States and other countries participated in the conference. The Centre is planning to gather more and more participants working in TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases in SAARC Member States and abroad in its third conference (still date is not decided).
12. Collaboration with International Organizations in TB Control

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre is WHO Collaborative Centre. It has also made collaboration and understanding with different UN agencies and INGOs for smooth functioning in control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region.

An MoU between SAARC and WHO was signed on 23 August 2000 to work collectively for TB & HIV/AIDS and renewed for continuing active in collaboration with WHO.

13. Publications of STAC

The Center has been publishing and distributing different documents for sharing and disseminating information in TB and HIV/AIDS, such as STAC Newsletters, Directory of TB and HIV/AIDS Institutions & Specialists in SAARC Member States, SAARC Journal of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS, General Information on TB and HIV/AIDS, Epidemiological information, Study Reports, History of TB Control Programme in SAARC Region, History of HIV/AIDS Control Programme in SAARC Region, National TB Control Programme and National AIDS Control Programme of all Member States, Diagnosis and Treatment Facilities in SAARC Member States, Guidelines for Partnerships etc.

14. Resource Centre

A library has been established as a resource centre for TB and HIV/AIDS information. Books, journals, newspapers, reports and other related publications/documents are catalogued for the use of TB control workers, researchers, specialists, medical practitioners, students, journalists and general people.
Annexure
Annex – I

1. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers for Microbiologist on Culture and DST of *M. Tuberculosis*, Bangalore, India

23rd to 29th May 2012

List of participants & Resource Persons

**Bhutan**

1. Mr. Karchung Tshering  
   Medical Technologist  
   P. O. Box No. 667, Ministry of Health, Thimphu, Bhutan

2. Mr. Kelzang Phuntsho  
   Medical Technologist  
   Public Health Laboratory, DOPH: MoH, Thimphu, Bhutan

**India**

1. Dr. Kumkum Bhattacharyya  
   Professor of Microbiology  
   North Bengal Medical College & Hospital  
   Shushrut Nagar, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India

2. Mr. Rupesh Kumar  
   Consultant Microbiologist  
   IRL, Jharkhand,  
   STDC Jharkhand, ITKI TB Sanatorium Campus, ITKI, Ranchi, India

   IRL Microbiologist (Contractual)  
   STDC, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

4. Dr. S. Dhanapaul  
   Professor Microbiology (Permanent)  
   Dept. of Microbiology  
   KAPV Govt. Medical College, Tiruchirappalli-620001  
   Tamilnadu, India

5. Dr. M. R. Vasanthapriyan  
   Assistant Professor of Microbiology (Permanent)  
   Institute of Microbiology, Madurai Medical College  
   Madurai – 625020, Govt. Medical College, Madurai, Tamilnadu, India
Maldives
1. Mr. Musthafa Jaleel
   Laboratory technologist
   Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital Laboratory
   Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH)
   Male, Maldives

2. Ms. Rahima Rasheed
   Laboratory Technologist
   Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital Laboratory
   Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH)
   Male, Maldives

Nepal
1. Mr. Ramji Prasad Sharma,
   Lab. Technician
   Regional TB Centre, Pokhara

2. Mr. Pradip Aryal
   Lab. Technician
   National TB Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur

Pakistan
1. Dr. Farrukh Nasir
   In-charge, Microbiologist
   TB Reference Laboratory, Khyber Pakistan
   Khawa TB Control Programme
   Aayartabad Medical Complex Peshawor, Pakistan

Sri-Lanka
1. Dr.(Mrs)Jayanthi Priyanganie Elvitigala
   Consultant Microbiologist,
   National TB Reference Laboratory, Welisara, Sri-Lanka

2. Dr. (Mrs) Dhammika Sirisena Vidanagama
   Consultant Microbiologist
   Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya, Galle, Sri-Lanka

Resource Persons
1. Ms. Ranjani Ramachandran
   WHO focal point (TB Labs), WHO New Delhi, India
2. Dr. S. Anand, Consultant Microbiologist, NTI, Bangalore
3. Ms. Hema Sundaram, Consultant Microbiologist, NTI, Bangalore
4. Ms. Reena K, Consultant Microbiologist, NTI, Bangalore
Course Coordinator
Dr. Prahlad Kumar, Director
National TB Institute, Bangalore

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre
1. Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director
2. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director
3. Dr Badri Thapa, Microbiologist
4. Ms. Meena K. Dhakal, Senior PA
Annex – II

2. SAARC Consultative Meeting of Programme Managers of HIV/AIDS to Develop SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2012-2016), Islamabad, Pakistan 15-17 June 2012

List of Participants & Organizers

Afghanistan
1. Mr. M. Younus Bargami
   NACP Coordinator
   NACP Office, MoPH, Kabul

2. Dr. Feda Mohammad Paikan
   NACP Manager

Bhutan
1. Dr. Thukten Chopel
   Chief Medical Officer
   Pemagatshel Hospital

2. Mr. Namgay Tshering
   Program Manager
   National HIV/AIDS & STI Control
   Department of Public Health
   MoH, Thimphu

India
1. Dr. Mahammed Shaukat Usta
   ADG NACP
   Dept. of AIDS Control
   Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
   New Delhi 110 001

2. Dr. Neeraj Dhingra
   Deputy Director General
   NACO, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
   New Delhi 110001

3. Dr. Rajesh Kumar
   Executive Director
   Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses
   SPYM centre, 111/9, Opposite Sector B-4, Vasant Kunj,
   New Delhi – 110070

Maldives
1. Mr. Abdul Hameed
   Assistant Executive Director
   (Society of Health Education), Male
2. Ms. Mariyam Waheeda
Assistant Public Health Programme Officer
Centre for Community Health and Diseases Control, MoH,
Male

3. Mr. Ahmed Nazim
Programme Officer – JOURNEY
Journey, G. Greenge, Male

Nepal
1. Dr. Krishna Kumar Rai
Director
National Centre for AIDS and STD Control
Teku, Kathmandu

2. Dr. Suvesh Raj Kayastha
Senior Medical Officer
Seti Zonal Hospital
Dhangadi, Kailali

Pakistan
1. Dr. Qazi Mujtaba Kamal
National Programme Manager
NACP, NIH, Islamabad

2. Dr. Sher Muhammad
Provincial Programme Manager,
Khybar, Peshawar

3. Dr. Ali Razaque
Senior Project Officer, GFATM Round 9
NACP, Islamabad

4. Dr. Sifia Siddiqui
Senior Programme Officer
NACP, Islamabad

5. Mr. Neem Akhtar
BCC Coordinator
NACP, Islamabad

6. Dr. Faran Emmanuel
Asst. Prof. UNIV of Manitoba
NACP, Islamabad

7. Ms. Farah Riza
Research Officer & Psychologist
NACP, Islamabad

8. Mr. Asif Amin Khan
PS to NPM
NACP, Islamabad
Sri Lanka
Mr. DCMS Dolapihilla
Youth Coordinator
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Colombo

SAARC Consultant
Dr. Ritu Mahendru

UNAIDS Regional Office or Asia & Pacific
Mr. Mohammed Ali Bhuiyan
Regional Programme Advisor
Bangkok, Thailand

UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu
Ms. Rachel Odede
Regional Advisor

UNDP, Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok
Ms. Nashida Sattar
Thailand

Asia & Pacific Coordination, Kathmandu
Mr. Rajiv Kafle
Advisor

SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu
1. Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree
   Director (Social Affairs)
2. Mr. Muzaffar Ali
   Senior Personal Assistant (SA)

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu
1. Dr. Kashi Kant Jha
   Director
2. Dr. Virender Singh Salhotra
   Deputy Director
3. Dr. Naseem Khan Afridi
   Epidemiologist
4. Mr. P.Bhandari
   Computer Technician
3. SAARC Regional Training on Research Methodology for Protocol Development (TB and HIV/AIDS Programme)
07-13 August, 2012, Thimphu, Bhutan

List of Participants and Facilitators

Bhutan

1. Dr. Neyzang Wangmo
   Dean, Research & External Linkage
   Royal Institute of Health Sciences, Royal University of Bhutan
   Thimphu

2. Mr. Dopo
   Statistical Officers
   HMIS, PPD, Ministry of Health, Thimphu

3. Mr. Nechen Dorji
   Health Assistant
   Trongsa General Hospital

4. Ms. Lila Maya Adhikari
   Medical Laboratory Technologist
   Public Health Laboratory

5. Dr. Sonu Subba
   General Duty Medical Officer
   Central Regional Referral Hospital, Gelephu

6. Mr. Lekey Khandu
   Program Officer
   NACP, Department of Public Health
   Ministry of Health, Thimphu

7. Mr. Sonam Wangda
   Laboratory Officer
   EMTD, Department of Medical Services
   Ministry of Health, Thimphu

8. Mrs. Lemo
   Health Assistant
   Gomtu Hospital, Samtse Dzongkhag

9. Mr. Tashi Dendup
   Program Officer
   NTCP, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Thimphu
India

1. Ms. Gunjika Vishwanath Misra
   Technical officer (R & D) NACO, India
   National AIDS Control Organisation,
   6th Floor, Chandarlok Building, 36 Janpath,
   New Delhi-110001, India

2. Dr. Amitav Das
   State Epidemiologist
   Orissa State AIDS Control Society
   Oil Orissa Building Nayapalli,
   Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India

3. Dr. Shailendra Bhatnagar
   Joint Director
   State TB Training Demonstration Central,
   Uttar Pradesh, Agra, India

Nepal

1. Dr. Sailesh Kumar Shrestha
   Medical Officer
   National TB Centre,
   Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal

Sir Lanka

1. Dr. Saman Kapilawansa
   Consultant Respiratory Physician
   Provincial General Hospital,
   Badulla, Sir Lanka

2. Dr. B. B. Amal M. Perera
   District TB Coordinating Officer
   Office of Regional Director Health Services,
   Ampara, Sri-Lanka

Resource Persons

1. Dr. Santha Devi
   Sr. Deputy Director (Rtd)
   TB Research Centre, Chennai, India

2. Dr. Rajeswari Ramachandran
   Deputy Director, senior grade (Rtd)
   TB research Centre, Chennai, India
3. Dr. Tashi Tobgay  
   Chief Program Officer  
   Department of Public Health,  
   Ministry of Health, Bhutan

4. Dr. Karma Lhazeen  
   Chief Program Officer  
   EMTD, Department of Medical Services  
   Ministry of Health, Bhutan

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Annex – IV

4. SAARC Regional Expert Group Meeting of TB Programme Managers to finalize the draft SAARC Regional Strategy for the Elimination/Control of Tuberculosis

06-07 December, 2012 in Kathmandu

List of Participants & Consultant

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