



STAC Newsletter



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Governing Board Members having discussions in the Meeting of Board held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 28th to 29th October, 2009.



Celebration of 25th SAARC Charter Day
"Awareness Programme for School Students, Teachers and Journalists"
Jointly organized by SIC and STAC in Kathmandu on 8th December 2009

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STAC Newsletter is a regular publication of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, it includes reports on activities, decisions of important meetings of the Centre and recent information on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and their control

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Editorial

The World leaders in the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AIDS in 2006 committed to scale up services to achieve the goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services by 2010. The countries with resource limited settings have made a considerable progress in this context. By December 2008, 4 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy in low- and middle-income countries, 1 million more than the previous year. Accessibility and acceptability of Counseling and Testing for HIV in 2008, has also improved considerably. Almost half of all pregnant women living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries received antiretrovirals to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Treatment services have also been made available to more children living with HIV. More countries are now phasing in efficacious antiretroviral regimens for preventing the mother-to-child transmission of HIV, including antiretroviral therapy for pregnant women who need treatment. The increased access to antiretroviral therapy and appropriate care has resulted in reduced mortality among people living with HIV at the country and global levels.

HIV continues to be a major public health problem in the SAARC region. The SAARC region had about 2.49 million estimated number of people living with HIV infection by the end of 2007. There is a wide variation in the number of people living with HIV/AIDS from less than 100 in Maldives to 2.31 million, in India. Three countries, namely India, Nepal and Pakistan account for majority of the regional burden. The overall adult HIV prevalence in SAARC region is remaining below 1%. However, there are important variations existing between countries. Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan have reported concentrated epidemics among most at risk populations.

The SAARC Region has also seen expansion of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. By the end of 2008, 238485 person were receiving Antiretroviral treatment in the SAARC region. Compared to the year 2004, it amounted to more than 9 fold expansion of the persons initiated on Antiretroviral treatment. All the SAARC Member States have initiated provision of Antiretroviral treatment through the National Programme. The preventive and care and support services have also been expanded manifold.

There has been a considerable progress in expansion of services for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS worldwide. From a virtual killer, HIV infection has now become a chronic manageable condition. However, we have still a long way to go for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS. The number of new infections every year still far exceeds the number of people placed on ART every year. The coverage of ART by the end of year 2008 was 42%, which means that still a large proportion of eligible HIV infected person are not receiving ART. Tuberculosis (TB) continues to be the leading cause of death among people living with HIV. In 2007, only 16% of people with notified TB knew their HIV status, resulting in low rates of access to co-trimoxazole prophylaxis and antiretroviral therapy for people living with HIV and TB. Let us work together to prevent and control the menace of HIV infection in our world.

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Report on Activities

1. Public Awareness and Advocacy Programmes on TB and HIV/AIDS

1.1. World AIDS Day (1st December)

Awareness Programme for Female Community Volunteers



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

Ms. Meera Sherchan, Women Development Officer, Government of Nepal chaired the function. Mr. Mukund Ranjit, Program Officer, District Development Committee, Government of Nepal, graced

the occasion as Chief Guest. Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC Secretariat graced the program as Guest of Honour.

After welcome by Mr. Jaya Bahadur Karki, District Health Officer, Government of Nepal, participants were acquainted with the existing problems of HIV/AIDS, and TB in the community as well as their preventive strategies. Experts from STAC explained the gravity and magnitude of problem and the preventive strategies applied to combat the diseases.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC extended a warm welcome to the participants and guests in the

program. He highlighted the Role of Female Community Volunteers in HIV/AIDS prevention and Control.

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

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

An interaction session was also held. Sixty community volunteers attended the program.

Special brochure on HIV/AIDS and TB was published in Nepali

language and were distributed to the participants.

Commemoration of World AIDS Day in SAARC Member States

World AIDS Day 2009 has been

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

1.2. Celebration of SAARC Charter Day (8th December)

Awareness Program for School Students, Teachers and Journalists on SAARC, TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), in collaboration with the SAARC Information Centre (SIC) celebrated 25th SAARC Charter Day on 8th December 2009 in Kathmandu. On the occasion, an **Awareness Program for School Students, Teachers & Journalists on SAARC, TB and HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control** was held at the premises of SIC. The Objective of the program was to enhance the awareness among school students, teachers, and journalists on important aspects of SAARC, HIV/AIDS and TB.

Mr. Shreedhar Gautam, Director, SIC welcomed the participants in the program. Mr. Azizuddin Ahmadzada, Director, SAARC Secretariat delivered his remarks on SAARC and its activities. Mr. Dharmendra Jha, President, Federation of Nepalese Journalist explained about the SAARC and



Media. Dr. V.S. Salhotra, Deputy Director and Dr. Ganga C. Pathirana, Technical Officer (HIV/AIDS), STAC made their presentations on TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC region and general information on the two diseases.

Mr. Yadab Kant Silwal, Former Secretary - General, SAARC, who graced the program as Chief Guest

shared his experiences with the participants. He thanked SIC and STAC for organizing very fruitful and appropriate program.

About hundred participants took part in the program.

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

2. SAARC Regional Training for Operational Research - Jaipur, India



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

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

The program was inaugurated on 4th August 2009 with the presence of Dr. O. P. Gupta, Director Health Services, Government of Rajasthan, India, as Chief Guest, Dr. K. N. Gupta, State TB Officer, Government of Rajasthan, India, as Special Guest, Dr. S.D. Gupta, Director, IIHMR, Jaipur, Dr. Kashi

Kant Jha, the Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal, Dr. Prahlad Kumar, Director, National Tuberculosis Institute, Bangalore, India and Dr. Kedar Nar Sing K.C., President, Nepal Medical Association Kathmandu, Nepal.

Dr. Anoop Khanna, Associate Professor, IIHMR, convened the opening ceremony as the Master of Ceremony.

Dr. S.D. Gupta, Director, IIHMR welcomed the participants and dignitaries in the meeting.

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, STAC Chaired the Inaugural Session and delivered his remarks. He thanked RNTCP and National HIV/AIDS Control Program (NACO) and IIHMR for facilitating to organize this training program in Jaipur, India. He explained problems on TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC region and emphasized the role of STAC in

Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and TB in this region. He stressed the role and need of Operational Research in the TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programs and necessity of capacity building in this regard.

The chief Guest & Special Guest also delivered their remarks.

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

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

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

3. SAARC Regional Training of Microbiologists for Sputum culture and Drug Susceptibility Test, NTI, Bangalore, India

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

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

Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC, Dr. K. M. Shiva Kumar, Additional Director, NTI, Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran, WHO/SEARO, Delhi and Mr. Dhruva Kumar Khadka, Microbiologist, STAC and Dr. Pritish Vaidyanathan, NTI attended the Inaugural Program.

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

The Objectives of the Training were:

- To enhance the knowledge & skills of the Microbiologists in diagnosing & monitoring of the treatment efficacies of TB/MDR-



TB and imparting trainings to health care providers and

- To improve the status of the NRLs to provide TB Culture and DST services and participate in DRS activities.

The training program was based on WHO/IUATLD Guidelines on Culture and DST; DRS based on country specific DRS Protocol and NTI Training Curriculum for Culture and DST. PowerPoint presentations, observation of different sections of NRL, practical, discussions, exercises and sharing of experiences were used during Technical Session.

Dr. Ranjani Ramachandran, WHO/SEARO, Mr. S. Anand, Consultant

Microbiologist, Ms. Reena K. along with the other laboratory staff of NTI facilitated the training.

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

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

4. SAARC Regional Training on Data Management, Sri Lanka

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

The Objectives of the training were:

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

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

Dr. P. G. Mahipala, Deputy Director General of Health Services (Public Health Services), Ministry of Health and Nutrition, Government of Sri Lanka graced the inaugural session as Chief Guest. Dr. A. K. S. B. Alwis, Programme Manager, National Programme for TB Control and Chest Diseases, Sri Lanka chaired the session. He welcomed the



participants, officials of Government of Sri Lanka and staff of STAC, Kathmandu. Dr. V. S. Salhotra Deputy Director, STAC delivered the inaugural address as well as brief introduction about the importance of data management. Dr. Nimal Edirisinghe, Programme Manager, National HIV/AIDS & STD Control Programme, delivered his remarks. Dr. Mahipala, the Chief Guest of the session delivered his remarks and extended thanks to Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, STAC and his team for the work carried out by the Centre for controlling and preventing TB and HIV/AIDS in the region

At the concluding of the training programme Dr. V. S. Salhotra thanked the participants and expressed gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for support and cooperation. He thanked SAARC Member

States for sending participants. He also thanked local and regional resource persons for their support and cooperation.

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

Outcome

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

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

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

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

- Assessment of the physical infrastructure and equipments of the STAC Lab and assist in developing lab infrastructure in line with international guidelines.
- Assessment of TB culture and Drug Susceptibility practices and give support in areas

which requires refinement and updates.

- Assist to update the laboratory manual and develop a standard operating procedures document for TB culture and Drug Susceptibility of first-line TB drugs.
- Review HR and assist to develop training plan (new and refresher) for Microbiologist and laboratory technicians for TB culture and drug susceptibility testing (first-line and second-line DST)
- Assistance for accreditation, planning and time lines.

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

The main agenda of the training was to give critical inputs for the layout of the new laboratory facility under construction. Accordingly the team visited new laboratory facility along with the architects and gave the necessary guidelines as per standard requirements for a

mycobacteriology laboratory based on the internationally accepted bio-safety and infection control norms. Subsequently the team visited the existing laboratory at the National TB Centre situated in the same premises. The team also observed the laboratory procedures along with technical inputs for refinements and discussions on all aspects of TB culture and DST, bio-safety, infections control, quality issues and administrative aspects required for a fully functional laboratory. The team discussed with Dr. P. Malla, the then Director, NTC regarding the technical inputs to the laboratory.

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

6. Nineteenth Meeting of Governing Board of STAC



Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was held from 28th to 29th October 2009 in Kathmandu. Dr. K. K. Jha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre welcomed the participants in the meeting by delivering the welcome address. Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director, Social Division, SAARC Secretariat gave his remarks. Dr. B. B. Rewari, Chairman, Governing Board, STAC delivered opening remarks. Dr. V.

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

The meeting was attended by **Dr. Syed Umar Khyyam**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh, **Dr. Ugen Dopfu**, Director, JDWNRH, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan, **Dr. B. B. Rewari**, National Program Officer (ART), NACO, New Delhi, India, Dr. Pushpa Malla, Director, National

Tuberculosis Centre, Government of Nepal, **Mr. Krishna Chandra Aryal**, Section Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal, **Mr. Muhammad Hassan Wazir**, Director (SAARC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, **Dr. A. K. Sunil B. De Alwis**, Director, NPTCCD, Government of Sri Lanka, **Mr. Hassan Shifau**, Director, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu and **Dr. Kashi Kant Jha**, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Bhaktapur, Nepal.

Dr. B. B. Rewari, Governing Board Member from India was selected as Chairman of the Governing Board of STAC. All Members of the Board congratulated him.

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

Brief News

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

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre has been appointed as Director of National Tuberculosis Centre, Government of Nepal from 27th December 2009, in addition to his responsibilities as Director of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre.



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

at

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC for the posts of
Epidemiologist, Research Officer and Microbiologist

Post : **Epidemiologist (Professional Staff)– (One)**

Period : **Three years**

Minimum Qualifications :

- a) Medical Graduation, M.B.B.S.
- b) Post Graduation/Masters Degree in Epidemiology or in Public Health.

Experience

- a) At least 3 years experience in infectious diseases Surveillance or epidemiological research. Preference will be given to the candidates having more experiences.
- b) At least 1 year or more experiences in tuberculosis or/ and HIV/AIDS surveillance or epidemiological research
- c) Experience in research design, planning and implementation.
- d) Experience in database design, data management and data analysis.
- e) Experience with database and statistical analysis software.
- f) Experience in statistical modeling considered as an asset.
- g) Experience in training considered as an asset.

Job Description

- a) To design and manage a database for housing epidemiological data on tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- b) To collect epidemiological data on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in the Member States.
- c) To monitor, maintain and evaluate the statistical data on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS
- d) To update all relevant statistical data on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- e) To prepare research and surveillance protocols, reports and papers for publication.
- f) To organise and deliver training to various levels of professional staff on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS epidemiology.
- g) To provide technical support to other professionals at the SAARC Regional Tuberculosis Centre and collaborating institutions.

Post : **Research Officer (Professional Staff)- (One)**

Period : **Three Years**

Minimum Qualification :

- a) M.B.B.S. or equivalent.
- b) Masters Degree in Public Health or Post Graduation in epidemiology, biostatistics or Community Medicine.

Experience :

- a) At least 3 years experience in conducting infectious disease surveillance or research. Preference will be given to the candidates who have experience in tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS surveillance or research. Preference will be given to the candidates having more experiences.
- b) Experiences in conducting Research, evaluation etc. of Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS.
- c) Good knowledge of dealing database (Experience in database design, data management and data analysis) and statistical software.
- d) Experience in report and proposal writing.

Job Description:

- a) To assist in the design and management of regional surveillance projects and epidemiological research in tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- b) To assist in the design of sampling schemes for regional tuberculosis smear microscopy and drug resistance surveillance projects and to assist in the analysis and evaluation of the resulting data.
- c) To assist and facilitate in training and research activities for various levels of professional staff on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS and its control.
- d) To work out the regional requirement of training and research in Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- e) To prepare research proposal, research and surveillance reports and papers for publication.
- f) To provide support to other collaborating institutions.

Post : Microbiologist (Professional Staff) - (One)

Period : Three years

Minimum Qualification:

- a) Medical Graduation, M.B.B.S.
- b) Masters Degree in Microbiology or MSc.(Medical Microbiology) and PhD in Medical Microbiology.

Experience :

- a) At least 3 years experience in a recognized laboratory performing routine & special diagnostic tests, including Sputum smear microscopy culture and drug susceptibility testing. Preference will be given to the candidates having more experiences.
- b) At least 2 years practical experience in a laboratory with a mycobacteriology section performing sputum smear microscopy, culture, and drug susceptibility testing of M. Tuberculosis. Preference will be given to the candidates having more experiences.
- b) Experience in research and Laboratory staff training in tuberculosis diagnostics considered as an assets.
- c) Experience in managing laboratory quality assurance programmes, in particular quality assurance of sputum smear microscopy, culture, and drug susceptibility of mycobacteria (Preferable) .
- d) Experience in HIV testing considered as an assets.
- e) Good knowledge in computer (Experience in database design, data management and data analysis)

Job Description:

- a) To operate a SAARC Regional Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Reference Laboratory to support National Tuberculosis Reference Laboratories in Member Countries in the area of quality assurance of smear microscopy, laboratory biosafety, culture, drug susceptibility testing, surveillance of drug resistance and HIV/AIDS related Laboratory services.
- b) To deliver Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS diagnostic reference services.
- c) To assist in organizing training in quality assurance of smear microscopy, culture and drug susceptibility testing, and the role of National Reference Laboratories in tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS control programmes.
- d) To assist in the coordination of regional drug resistance surveillance.
- e) To provide technical support to National Tuberculosis Reference Laboratories in SAARC Member States.

Detailed information on appointment procedures, terms & conditions etc. is available at the SAARC Division, Ministry of Foreign/External Affairs, Member States of SAARC. The duly filled Application FORM & supporting documents with the recommendation of competent authorities should reach the Director of the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur, P.O.Box No. 9517, Kathmandu, Nepal through the Ministry of Foreign/External Affairs of the respective Member State not later than end of the May, 2010.

Note: Application Form and other details are available on the Centre's Website. www.saarctb.com.np

7. Situation Analysis of NTP and NACP in Afghanistan

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

The objectives of the activity were:

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

The methodologies adopted to carry out the situation analysis were through discussion with NTP, NACP and Health Laboratory authorities, reviewing of available registers, reports, records and documents, informal discussions with services



seekers and observations during field visits.

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

team visited Ministry of Health, National TB Control Programme Office, VCTC Kabul, Infectious Disease Hospital and National HIV/AIDS Control Programme Office in Kabul, Afghanistan.

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

Outcome:

Study team made several recommendations on the basis of the findings during the study from both National TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes.



8. Meeting of Managers of NTP and NACP of SAARC Member States, Maldives

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

The objectives of the meeting were:

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

The following participants presented country presentation in the Meeting:

- Dr. Ataulah Zarabi, Head, ACMS, NTP, Afghanistan,
- Dr. Kuldeep Singh Sachdeva, CMO, NTP, India,



- Dr. D. Bachani, Deputy Director General, NACP, India,
- Ms. Fathima Reeza, Programme Officer, NTP, Maldives,
- Mr. Abdul Hameed, Programme Manager, TB & HIV/AIDS, Maldives,
- Dr. Sunil De Alwis, Programme Manager, NTP, Sri Lanka and
- Dr. Nimal Edirisinghe, Programme Manager, NACP, Sri Lanka.

Opening Session

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

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

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

Outcome

The meeting developed recommendations on different issues, such as issues and problems for participation in

STAC activities from Member States, establishment of regular coordination mechanism between TB and HIV/AIDS programmes,

up gradation of STAC Regional TB Ref. Lab., supply of Annual Report from Member States to STAC on regular basis, established

website linkages, exploring of possible funding for training and management, uniformity on MIS etc.

9. Participation in the International Conferences/Meetings/Workshops:

1. Participation in Meeting of Collaboration Institutions WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA

On the invitation of WHO/SEARO Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC participated in the "Regional Workshop on TB Surveillance and Programme Monitoring and Evaluation" held at National TB Institute, Bangalore, India from 20th to 24th July 2009 in the capacity of Temporary Advisor to the Regional Director.

2. International AIDS Conference

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

- i. Community based risk behavior study on HIV/AIDS targeting women in Nepal (Poster), by – Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. V. S. Salhotra and Dr. A.

P. Weerakoon from SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC).

- ii. HIV epidemic in the SAARC region and regional efforts to contain it (e-paper) by – Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon and Dr. G. C. Pathirana from STAC.

- iii. Identify the ways and means of collaboration between TB and HIV/AIDS programmes to find out the challenges in implementation and suggest solutions in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Member States (Poster discussion) by – Dr. K. K. Jha, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Dr. L. Shrestha, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon from STAC and Dr. S. Maroofi from NTP Afghanistan, Dr. M. A. A. Miah from NTP Bangladesh, Ms. S. Hussain from NTP Maldives, Dr. P. Malla from NTP Nepal, Dr. S. Hanif & Dr. E. Quadeer from NTP Pakistan and Dr. C. Sarukkali from NTP Sri Lanka.

3. Participation in Annual Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop

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

4. Participation in Regional Workshop on Infection Control to Prevent Tuberculosis Transmission in Health Facilities

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

5. Participation in 40th Union World Conference on Lung Health, Mexico

Dr. Kashi Kant Jha, Director, participated in World Conference, organized by International Union

against TB and Lung Disease (IUATLD) the UNION. The conference was held in Cancun, Mexico from 3rd to 7th December 2009. Dr. Jha presented the following papers:

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

By these presentations, the world forum of TB control has been acquainted with the current

status of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region.

6. SAARC Consultative Meeting on Public Health Challenges in South Asia

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

7. SAARC Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities

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

8. Initiation of Online Submission of Manuscripts

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

9. Farewell to Dr. Lochana Shrestha

Dr. Lochana Shrestha, completed her tenure as Epidemiologist in SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre on 30th Sept. 2009. STAC is very much thankful to Dr. Shrestha for her contributions to the Centre and wishes her a great success in future.

World TB Day 2010

This year's slogan is

On the move against tuberculosis

Innovate to accelerate action

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