



SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre
Kathmandu, Nepal



ANNUAL REPORT

2021- 2023

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Preface

The SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) established in 1992, has been steadfast in its mission to support the elimination of tuberculosis (TB) and the end of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the SAARC region. The Centre continues to advance this mandate by fostering regional collaboration and providing coordinated technical support to Member States.

In addition to its routine programme activities, STAC has consistently organized time bound and need based regional trainings, workshops and meetings aimed at strengthening the National TB and HIV/AIDS programmes of Member States. The Centre also provides technical and financial support for research initiatives, contributing to evidence-based policy and programme development across the region the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021 posed significant challenges, including travel restrictions, safety concerns, limitations on in-person gatherings, and financial restrictions. This disruption extended into 2022 and 2023, significantly affecting the implementation of planned regional activities. Despite these limitations, the Centre successfully conducted one regional activity in hybrid format during this period. Concurrently, STAC sustained its core functions, including research, technical support to Member States and partner organizations, awareness, and advocacy programs, and dissemination of knowledge through its journals, epidemiological reports, and digital platforms. This volume of e-Annual Report of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) presents a comprehensive account of programme activities and achievement for the period 2021-2023.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere appreciation to the Managers of National TB and HIV/AIDS programmes of SAARC Member States for their continued cooperation and commitment throughout these challenging years. I also express my heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC the Members of the Governing Board of STAC and the Director, Social Affairs Division, SAARC Secretariat for their unwavering support and guidance.

STAC remains firmly committed to supporting Member States in their efforts towards the elimination of TB and HIV/AIDS. The Centre welcomes continued suggestions, guidance and feedback to further strengthen its role and enhance its contributions in the years ahead.

✓ On behalf of former Directors (2021-2023)
STAC
27 April, 2026



Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director (STAC), and Dr. Rabeya Sultana, Deputy Director (STAC), for their encouragement and guidance in the compilation of this document.

We also extend our appreciation to Mrs. Meena Kumari Dhakal, SPA / Officiating Administrative Officer; Mr. Yogendra Bahadur Mahata, Computer Technician; and Mr. Rajesh Chaudhary, Administrative Assistant, for their dedicated efforts in preparing this document.

27 April, 2026

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (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 problem in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. The SAARC comprises of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The main objectives 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 States 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 Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)

The Centre was established in 1992 as SAARC Tuberculosis Centre (STC) and started functioning from 1994. The Centre had been supporting the National Tuberculosis Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States. The Thirty–first session of Standing Committee of SAARC held in Dhaka on November 9 – 10th 2005, appreciating the efforts of the Centre on TB/HIV co-infection and other work s related to HIV/AIDS discipline and approved the renaming of the Centre as SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) with additional mandate to support SAARC Member States for prevention of HIV/AIDS. Since then with its efforts and effective networking in the Member States the Centre is contributing significantly for control of both TB and HIV/AIDS.



(Office Building of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal)

Vision: SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) plays the role as a leading institute to support and guide SAARC Member States to make the region free of TB and HIV/AIDS.

Mission: To Support the efforts of National TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes through evidence-based policy guidance, coordination and technical support.

Goal: To bring to an end the morbidity and mortality due to TB and HIV/AIDS in the region and end the transmission of both infections until TB and HIV/AIDS cease to be public health problems in the SAARC Region.

Objective

- To eliminate TB and end HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region by coordinating the efforts of the National TB Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Programmes of the SAARC Member States.

Functions of STAC

- To act as a Regional Co-ordination Centre for NTPs and NACPs in the Region.
- To promote and coordinate action for the prevention of TB/HIV co-infection in the Region.
- To collect, collate, analyze and disseminate all relevant information regarding the latest development and findings in the field of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region and elsewhere.
- To establish a networking arrangement among the NTPs and NACPs of Member States and to conduct surveys, researches etc.
- To initiate, undertake and coordinate the Research and Training in Technical Bio-medical, operational and other aspects related to control of Tuberculosis and prevention of HIV/AIDS in the Region.
- To monitor epidemiological trends of TB, HIV/AIDS and MDR-TB in the Region.
- To assist Member States for harmonization of policies and strategies on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection.
- To assist National TB Reference Laboratories in the Region in quality assurance of sputum microscopy and standardization of culture and drug sensitivity testing and implementation of bio-safety measures.
- To carry-out other important works identified by the Programming Committees/Governing Board.

Annual Report 2021

1. Thirtieth Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC

Thirtieth meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was organized virtually on 12 November 2020, Kathmandu, Nepal. The Board reviewed the activities carried out by the Centre in 2020 and recommended the Programmes and Budget of the Centre for the year 2021.

Recommended Programmes of the Centre for the year 2021

1. Meeting to develop collaboration mechanism on cross boarder for TB and HIV/AIDS patients to ensure their treatment. (Afghanistan and Pakistan)
2. Meeting to develop collaboration mechanism on cross boarder for TB and HIV/AIDS patients to ensure their treatment. (Bangladesh and India)
3. Meeting to develop collaboration mechanism on cross boarder for TB and HIV/AIDS patients to ensure their treatment. (Bhutan and India)
4. Meeting to develop collaboration mechanism on cross boarder for TB and HIV/AIDS patients to ensure their treatment. (India and Nepal)
5. World TB Day- 2021 Advocacy programme/Joint function
6. SAARC Meeting to review the SAARC Regional Strategies on ACSM and Migrant Health and Cross border issues
7. SAARC Regional Meeting to develop/refine appropriate mechanism for Regional Drugs/Logistic (TB and HIV/AIDS) procurement
8. SAARC Training on occupational health and safety for health worker of Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS NTPs and NACPs.
9. SAARC Regional ToT on Latent TB Infection
10. SAARC Training on TB-Tobacco and COVID-19 association
11. SAARC Training on Risk Assessment for mass gatherings on pandemic/epidemic situation
12. SAARC Meeting for situation assessment to measure the impact of COVID-19 on National TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes strategic plans
13. SAARC Seminar to develop and finalization of SOP on Cross Border/Migrant Health issues on TB and HIV/AIDS
14. World AIDS Day-2021, Advocacy programme/Joint function
15. SAARC Charter Day- 2021

Research

16. Study-Tracing the Possible Source of Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) into Bhutan: A 2018-2020 Cohort Study- Bhutan
17. The impact of the covid-19 pandemic on directly observed treatment short-course (DOTS) program for tuberculosis in Nepal
18. Call for EoI from Member States for small scale research grants –one/two country

Regular Activities

19. Participation and presentation of scientific papers in International Conferences by STAC Union World Conference on Lung Health/Tobacco OR/and International AIDS Conference on HIV/AIDS, STI and/or Any other relevant conference
20. Participation/presentation of scientific papers in the SAARC regional conferences/workshops/meetings/ consultations in the Member States by the Director/professional/GSS
21. Participation in the Review of activities NTPs and NACPs in the SAARC Member States by STAC.
22. Participation in Meeting of collaborating Institutions for Strengthening of Networking WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA & other collaborating institutes.
23. Review of Article for SAARC Journals of TB Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS.
24. Skill development of GSS by conducting Training/attending field related Trainings/Workshops/Conference
25. Regular works/activities in SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS and Procurement of Laboratory consumables
26. Regular Collection and compilation of data and information patients form joint SAARC/National Reference Laboratory at NTCC and analyze the data and information for situation assessment and recommendation.
27. Technical assistance support to the STAC/NTP/NACP by providing/hiring short term consultancy, utilizing the experts from the region without financial liability to respective programmes of member states/ mid-term review of SAARC regional strategies on TB and HIV/AIDS
28. Meetings/consultations to refine and finalize the technical documents/reports of STAC by involving the Kathmandu based experts from WHO/UNAIDS/IOM/others (Nepal)

29. The Meeting of Programme Managers/representatives of National TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes of SAARC Member States for discussion of pipelined activities and other issues

30. Purchasing/renewal of Journal TB, HIV/AIDS and software for Library, strengthening digital library

31. Publications

- Preparation and Publication of STAC E-Newsletters- (E-publication and circulation)
- Preparation and Publication of SAARC Epidemiological Report on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection 2021 (E-publication and circulation)
- Preparation and Publication of Annual Report- 2020 (E-publication and circulation)
- Printing-STAC Journal of Tuberculosis Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS
- Printing-SAARC Guideline and SOPs for Health Response on natural and epidemic Disasters in SAARC Member States/other document.
- Printing of Wall Calendar 2022/ promotional materials
- Printing of other Publications/Technical Document/Reports

2. The Meeting of the Programme Managers on TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programme of SAARC Member States (Virtual)

In compliance with decision of Thirteenth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) the second **Meeting of Programme Managers/representatives of National TB and HIV/AIDS Programmes of SAARC Member States for discussion of pipelined activities and other issues, virtually held on 13 April, 2021.** The Centre received confirmation of participation from the National programmes of Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. However, the participant from Afghanistan was not able to participate due to connectivity/technical Problem.

Opening of the Meeting:

- i. As per SAARC Practice, Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, National TB Control Centre, Ministry of Health & Population, Government of Nepal (Governing Board Member) Chaired the Meeting. Dr. Bhattachan opened the Meeting and delivered his opening remarks. He thanked STAC for organizing this meeting using Zoom technology and for the arrangements made for the Meeting to discuss its Calendar and pipeline activities.
- ii. Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC delivered the welcome remarks during opening of the Meeting. He welcomed all the participants for their confirmation and participation in spite of their busy schedule. He regretted that the extraordinary situation created by the COVID 19 pandemic did not allow for a physical meeting. He recalled first such Meeting of the Programmes that was held on 16th September, 2020, to discuss the pipelined activities and other relevant issues, which would be supportive for better understanding, closer cooperation and frequent sharing of lessons learnt, to overcome these challenges and to achieve the targets. He informed the meeting about the arrangement of some regional level activities, planned for 2021, to be conducted in virtual mode.
- iii. The Agenda of the meeting was circulated by the Centre.

Technical session

Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC, made a brief presentation on Implementation of calendar of activities of the year 2021- Progress and challenges, which covered the status of concurrences from the Member States, ongoing/pending research activists and non-settlements of advances with National Programmes.

The Country remarks and discussions

On behalf of the National Programmes, Dr. M.A. Hadi Khan, representing the National TB Control Programme, Government of Bangladesh, Dr. Tandin Zangpo, , NTPs and Dr. Lekey Khadup, NACP, Department of Public Health , Ministry of Health, Thimphu, Bhutan; Dr. Somenath Karmakar, Adviser (HAG), Central TB Division: Dr. Anoop Puri, DDG , NACO, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India; Dr. Naveen Prakash Shah, National TB Control Centre, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal; Mr. Sudip Alemagar, National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal; Dr. Nasim Akhtar, Deputy National Coordinator, Tuberculosis, Dr Ayseha NACP, Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination, Islamabad, Pakistan; and Dr. Rasanjali Hettiarachchi, Director, National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP), Colombo, Government of Sri Lanka delivered their remarks and views in the Meeting.

Discussions

- i. Dr. M.A. Hadi Khan, representing the National TB Control Programme, Government of Bangladesh mentioned about the current situation of TB and its impact in Bangladesh.
- ii. Dr. Tandin Zangpo, on behalf of National TB Control Programme Bhutan gave the progress on the some on-going Research Activities in Bhutan, He also requested STAC to propose a study for Bhutan Estimating tuberculosis cases and their additional economic costs Incurred by TB Patients and their Families for TB Diagnosis and Treatment for next year.
- iii. Mr. Lekey Khandu, Program Manager, NACP, Department of Public Health, mentioned the progress of this year's progress.
- iv. Dr Anoop Kumar Puri, Deputy Director General, National AIDS Control Organization, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India informed that NACO has already sent their acceptance for concurrence on the revised Calendar of Activities of

STAC for the year 2021 to the Ministry of Health family welfare communicate to STAC through proper channel, However, they are ready to convey it directly to STAC. He also mentioned no advances are due under the NACP, Government of India.

- v. Dr. Somenath Karmakar, Adviser (HAG), Central TB Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, briefed about concurrence given the National TB Elimination, programme, Government of India. He suggested to STAC to propose needful research programmes targeting TB Elimination of India by the 2025.
- vi. Dr. Naveen Prakash Shah, Sr. Consultant Physician, National TB Control Centre, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal shared the finding of a study conducted by NTCC on impact of COVID-19 on National TB Programme of Nepal.
- vii. Mr. Sudip Alemagar, NACP, Nepal briefed about the current activities of their National programme in the Meeting.
- viii. Dr. Bushra Jamil, National Coordinator/Chief, Common Management Unit (HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria), Government of Pakistan brief about the situation of national programmes of Pakistan. She promised the full support and commitment for the STAC Activities. Dr. Nasim Akhtar, Deputy National Coordinator, tuberculosis and Dr. Ayesha Esani, Deputy National coordinator HIV AIDS, Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination briefed the details on their national programme. The delegations from Pakistan assured the concurrence on the revised calendar of activities of STAC. The delegation also showed their keen interest about the benefit of SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for the Region.
- ix. Dr. Rasanjali Hettiarachchi, Director, National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP), Colombo, briefed the experience of their national programme in the Meeting.

The meeting suggested the STAC to incorporate the possible suggestions of the participants in future planning.

Recommendations:

- i. The meeting discussed on the presentation made by STAC regarding status of concurrence from the Member States for its Calendar of activities of the year 2021. The Meeting noted that Centre has received the complete concurrence on the revised Calendar of Activities from National TB Elimination Programme, Government of India and National TB Control Programme, Government of Nepal only. Due to lack of concurrence from concerned National Programmes, the scheduled events are being affected. Therefore, the Managers/representatives participating in this meeting concurred on the revised calendar of Activities of the Centre of the year 2021, as circulated by Centre vide its letter dated 24 February, 2021 and SAARC Secretariat's Noted 18th March, 2021. However, the National Programme wise confirmation will be conveyed to STAC by the Member States as soon as possible within a week for smooth operation of STAC's revised calendar of activities.
- ii. While discussing physical events of the Centre proposed for last quarter of the year, the meeting advised the Centre to try to hold the meetings/programmes in physical mode, if feasible. In case of travel restrictions caused by COVID-19 pandemic, these events may be converted into virtual mode for the same dates, wherever feasible.
- iii. The meeting also discussed on the list of some pending research programmes with some National Programmes, presented by Centre. The delay in outcomes of studies may decrease the scientific value of finding, therefore, the Meeting recommends the Centre to expedite with concerned National Programmes for early completion of pending studies.
- iv. The Centre also sensitized the meeting about the long pending issues of non-settlement of advances, non-receipt of feedback on the documents/correspondence. The participants agreed to facilitate within their own National Programmes for;
- v. Sending of Technical and financial reports to STAC for closure/settlement of advances;
- vi. Feedbacks on the documents/correspondence circulated by the STAC to the National Programmes on different dates and occasions.
- vii. The meeting suggested STAC to hold such consultations in each quarter, which would be helpful for discussing the progress and challenges on the implementation of calendar and pipeline activities.

Adoption of the Report

The Meeting adopted its Report/Recommendations.

Closing of the Meeting

List of Participants for the meeting

Bangladesh

1. Dr. M.A. Hadi Khan,
National TB Control Programme,
Directorate General of Health Services,
Government of Bangladesh.

Bhutan

1. Rixin Jamtsho Chief Program Officer,
Communicable Disease Division,
Department of Public Health
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu
2. Ugyen Dendup,
Dy. Chief Program Officer,
National TB Control Program (NTCP)
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu
3. Dr. Tandin Zangpo,
Officer on Special Assignment TB/HIV/AIDS,
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu
4. Mr. Lekey Khandup
Programme Manager
National HIV/AIDS Programme,
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu
5. Phurpa Tenzin
National TB Control Program (NTCP)
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu
6. Choki Dolkar,
Asst. Program Officer,
National TB Control Program (NTCP)
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu

India

1. Dr. Somenath Karmakar
Adviser (HAG),
Central TB Division
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Govt. of India
2. Dr Anoop Kumar Puri
Addl. Deputy Director General
National AIDS Control Organization
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare,
Government of India

Nepal

1. Dr. Anuj Bhattachan
Director
National TB Control Centre,
Ministry of Health and Population,
Government of Nepal
2. Dr. Naveen Prakash Shah
Sr. Consultant Physician,
National TB Control Centre,
Ministry of Health and Population
3. Mr. Sudip Alemagar
National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC),
Ministry of Health and Population,
Government of Nepal

Pakistan

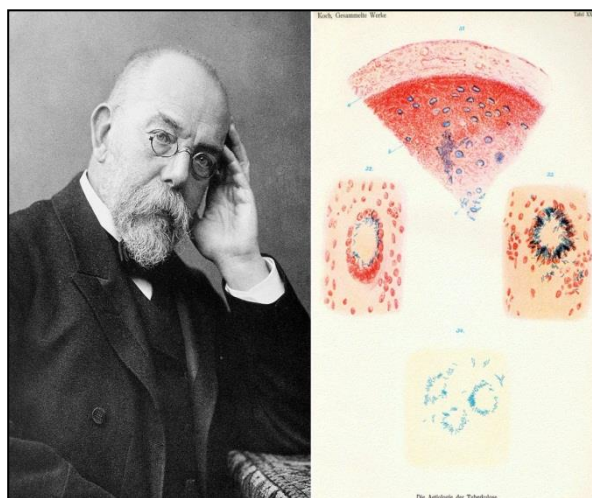
1. Dr Bushra Jamil
National Coordinator
Common Management Unit (HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria),
Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination
Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, G-8/3, Islamabad.
2. Dr Nasim Akhtar
Deputy National Coordinator TB
Common Management Unit
Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination
Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, G-8/3, Islamabad.

3. Dr Ayesha Esani
Deputy National coordinator HIV AIDS
Common Management Unit
Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination
Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, G-8/3, Islamabad.
4. Dr Razia Fatima
Chief, Research
Common Management Unit CMU
Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination
Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, G-8/3, Islamabad.

Sri Lanka

1. Dr. Rasanjali Hettiarachchi,
Director,
National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP),
Colombo

3. Commemoration of World TB Day 2021



Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium Tuberculosis as causative bacteria to cause Tuberculosis on 24th March, 1882 which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this deadly disease. The World TB Day and SAARC TB Day is commemorated on 24 March to educate the public and raising awareness about the impact of TB in global, regional and national level and the day which brings all the stakeholders together to fight against this deadly disease.

Objectives:

General: To advocate, communicate and create social awareness on tuberculosis

Specific:


- To disseminate information on tuberculosis
- To sensitize the general public in the elimination of tuberculosis

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) also has been commemorating the World TB Day and SAARC TB Day every year by organizing different level of advocacy and awareness activities in close collaboration with concerned National Programme, Government of Nepal and development partners. The Centre has commemorated the World TB Day and SAARC TB Day-2021 by conducting the following events:

Advocacy, communication and social mobilization activities on World TB Day and SAARC TB Day 2021

Message by H.E. the Secretary-General, SAARC


His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, the Secretary General, SAARC issued a Message on the occasion of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day 2021, which was circulated to all the Member States for media coverage and wider dissemination of the Message.



SAARC

SECRETARY GENERAL

SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION
SECRETARIAT



MESSAGE

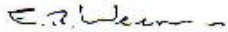
**WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY
24 MARCH 2021**

The World Tuberculosis Day is observed every year on 24th March to mark the discovery of the bacterium causing Tuberculosis (TB) by Dr. Robert Koch in 1882. The Day is an opportunity to spread public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB as well as to make pledges for persistent efforts to end this global menace. The Day is also commemorated as the SAARC TB Day across the South Asian region.

In spite of the ongoing global efforts to control the spread of TB, it still remains one of the deadliest infectious diseases. Every year, millions of people fall sick with TB and hundreds of thousands succumb to this preventable and curable disease. The theme of the World TB Day for 2021 - "The Clock is Ticking" - aptly reflects the fact that there has not been satisfactory progress towards achieving global targets and that we are running out of time in implementing the commitments to end TB, outlined in the UN Political Declaration on Tuberculosis adopted during the first-ever UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis held in 2018. Even though the number of people treated for TB has increased after the UN High-level Meeting in 2018, much remains to be done to reach the global targets. We can achieve these only when we are able to provide equitable access to quality and timely diagnosis, prevention, treatment and care for the disease. Although the past year was devoted to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is heartening that the number of new infections of TB is on the decline, calling for innovative ways to retain the success achieved in its prevention and control in the previous years.

The SAARC region, with an estimated incidence of 3.7 million TB cases, accounts for 37% of the global burden of TB. In this backdrop, the efforts made by the Member States of SAARC for the control of TB in the region, especially since the establishment of the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) in 1992, are indeed very encouraging. However, there are many challenges, such as multi-drug resistant TB, extensively drug resistant TB, TB in children, Latent TB and TB/HIV co-infection. Moreover, many people in our region continue to suffer from this disease because of poverty, gender inequality, vulnerability, marginalization as well as inadequate access to quality care, including affordable diagnostic and treatment facilities.

On this Day, I wish to sincerely request the Member States of SAARC to work collectively with a resolve to achieve the target of eliminating TB in the SAARC region by 2027, three years ahead of the global target. I also take this opportunity to congratulate STAC for consistently supporting the Member States in this endeavour.



(Esala Ruwan Weerakoon)



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Publication of an article on the National Daily Newspaper

An article titled 'The Clock is Ticking' composed by Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director and Dr. Virender Singh Salhotra, Dy. Director of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre was published in National Daily Newspaper 'The Rising Nepal' on 24th March 2021 on the eve of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day. The article highlighted on the efforts necessary to achieve the goal of eliminating TB by detecting and treating 40 million TB patients and providing TB preventive therapy to 30 million people by 2030.

World TB Day

The Clock Is Ticking



Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal & Dr. Virender Singh Salhotra

Public health problem

With an estimated 10 million people afflicted and 1.4 million dying of it in 2019, TB remains a major public health problem. Globally, there are 30 high burden countries which account for 87 per cent of Global TB Burden. Three countries in the SAARC region, namely India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which feature amongst 30 countries, account for 35.7 per cent of the Global TB Burden. Furthermore, as the bacteria causing TB is getting resistant to the commonly used first line drugs, it has led to emergence of Drug Resistant TB for which the treatment is longer, less effective, expensive and associated with more side effects. In 1993, the WHO declared TB a public health emergency and called upon all governments to scale up steps to control TB.

Since then, the WHO, the United Nations, national governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities have been making sustained efforts to eradicate TB. Their joint initiatives were bolstered by an increased commitment for finding the gaps for TB control activities. This saved the lives of 63 million people. This is no mean feat but it is not enough. How do we control and get rid of it? We can emulate the success story of TB eradication by the European and other developed countries. It was not only the treatment of TB with potent antibiotics which enabled these countries in controlling their TB burden.

There were many other determinants, contributing to control of TB in these countries. There are several risk factors which are clearly documented to increase vulnerability to TB. For example, malnutrition resulting into low immunity is a risk factor. We all know that HIV leads to decreased immunity and the person becomes vulnerable to TB. HIV is on top of the list in the risk factors for TB. An HIV-infected person is 15-22 times more likely to develop TB than a person without HIV.

Another factor is overcrowding that increases chances of infection transmission while improved housing decreases risk of disease transmission. Smoking is also a major risk factor. Smokers have chance of catching TB by 2-3 times higher than that of non-smokers. There are other indirect salutary effects of development - improved literacy reduces risky behaviour and household smoke and ensures access to quality of health services. Another important intervention is the implementation of TB preventive therapy. One fourth of the global population is estimated to be infected with TB bacillus. One of 10 has chance of developing TB. With the advent of new drugs and researches, it is now possible to eliminate TB through preventive therapy. However, it is easier said than done to convince even healthy people to take drug regimen from 3-6 months.

All UN member states have agreed to work towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) - 17 goals with 169 targets - by 2030. They set out a vision for a world free from poverty, hunger and disease. Health has a central place in SDG 3 that stresses 'ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages,' underpinned by 13 targets. The target 3.3 states eradicating the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases. Almost all of the other 16 goals are related to health or their achievements will contribute indirectly to health, including the control and eradication of TB.

Multi-sectoral initiatives

In order to achieve the goal of eliminating TB by 2030, the United Nations Assembly, for the first time, held a United Nations High Level Meeting on TB where global leaders committed to detecting and treating 40 million TB patients, and provide TB preventive therapy to 30 million people by 2030. This will help meet the target of diagnosing and treating 15.7 million people with TB and provide TB preventive therapy to 9.8 million people by 2022. However, this formidable task suffered a setback due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

It is evident that the efforts of Ministry of Health and Population alone can't lead to eradication of TB. There is a need for multi-sectoral initiatives to deal with the social determinants of TB infection and disease. They include the poverty alleviation, social protection, nutrition and housing quality, education and other development related works.

(Dr. Lal & Dr. Salhotra work at the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur)



Participation in the talk show

Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC and Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, NTCC jointly participated in the talk show programme organized and hosted by the National Broadcasting Agency, Radio Nepal. The Programme was broadcasted on 22nd March 2021 on the eve of World TB Day. Link to the radio show is:

https://www.facebook.com/radionepal/live_videos/?ref=page_internal

Printing of Bulletin on TB epidemiology

A bulletin (Fact Sheet) on TB epidemiology was prepared and printed on the occasion of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day.

World TB Day and SAARC TB Day 2021 Bulletin

TB Epidemiology

Burden of TB (Global vis-à-vis SAARC)

Globally, there are 30 high burden countries which account for 87% of Global TB Burden. There are 3 countries in the SAARC region, namely India, Pakistan and Bangladesh which feature amongst these thirty countries and account for 35.7% % of the Global TB Burden.

Globally, an estimated 10.0 million people fell ill with TB (130 cases per 100 000 Population) in 2019, a number that has been declining very slowly in recent years. 7.5 million cases were notified in 2019 across the globe which means there was a gap of 2.5 million (25%) between incident and notified cases. For the cases notified in 2018, the treatment success rate was 85 % which is considered as a good achievement.

There were an estimated 1.2 million (range, 1.1–1.3 million) deaths from TB among HIV-negative people in 2019 and an additional 208 000 (range, 177 000–242 000) deaths from TB among HIV positive people. TB is the 10th leading cause of death worldwide and, since 2007, it has been the leading cause of death from a single infectious agent, ranking above HIV/AIDS. Overall globally, there were an estimated 465 000 (range, 400 000–535 000) incident cases (number of cases that occurred in a year) of MDR/RR-TB in 2019. Globally, 456 426 cases of TB among people living with HIV were notified in 2019, equivalent to 9.5% of the 4.8 million TB patients with an HIV test result. 88% of these patients were started on Anti Retroviral Treatment.

In the SAARC region, an estimated 3.7 million people fell ill with TB (203 cases per 100 000 Population). In 2019, 3.1million TB cases were notified in 2019 in the SAARC region, which means there was a gap of 0.6 million (16%) between incident and notified cases. For the cases notified in 2018 in the SAARC region, the treatment success rate was 85 %.

In the SAARC region, there were an estimated 150000 (range, 400 000–535 000) incident cases of MDR/RR-TB in 2019. In the SAARC region, 47664 cases of TB among people living with HIV were notified in 2019. 95% of these patients were started on ART. The table on the problem explained, is given below (Table 1):

Table 1. Global vs. SAARC TB Indicators 2019

TB Control Indicators	Global	SAARC	% of Global
Estimated Population	7.69 billion	1.83 billion	24
Estimated Incidence	10 million	3.7 million	37
	(130 cases/100 000)	(203 cases/100 000)	
Estimated Deaths Due to TB	1.4 million	0.5 million	45
Total cases notified	7.5 million	3.1 million	41
New and relapse notified cases	7.1 million	2.8 million	39
Treatment Success Rate (2018 cohort)	85%	85%	-
Estimated MDR/RR- TB incidence	0.46 million	0.15 million	32
Patients with Known HIV Status who are HIV Positive	0.45 Million (9.5% of tested)	0.047 Million	10
Patients with Known HIV Status who are HIV Positive on ART	0.39 Million (88%)	0.045 Million (95%)	12

Source: www.who.int/tb/data/TB_country_regional_and_global_profiles

Participation in the Press Meet

A Press Meet was organized by National Tuberculosis Control Centre at the Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population, Teku, Kathmandu, Nepal on 23 March 2021 on the commemoration of World TB Day. Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director General, Department of Health Services, Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC, Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, National Tuberculosis Control Centre and Mr. Mukti Nath Khanal, Chief, MESR Section, NTCC along with 50 journalists representing different media house from the capital attended the Press Meet. Director, NTCC read out the press release highlighting the situation of tuberculosis in the country. Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC highlighted on the situation of TB epidemiology in the SAARC region. The Bulletin/Fact Sheet on TB Epidemiology prepared by SAARC TB & HIV Centre was distributed to the journalist and representatives present in the Press Meet.

Display of Flex banner in Tribhuvan International Airport TIA, Kathmandu



Flex banner with informative messages on tuberculosis on the commemoration of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day was displayed in the Arrival and Departure area of the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu with the permission of concerned authority at the TIA for three days i.e. 23, 24 and 25th March 2021. The Director, STAC thanked Mr. Pratap Babu Tiwari, General Manager TIA, Kathmandu for his facilitation to put the premier place which had greatly supported the Global and National campaign to End TB.



Display on Exhibition Board

Advocacy information on tuberculosis was displayed on the Exhibition Board during the Orientation and the Painting Competition held on 10th and 19th March 2021 respectively.

Orientation Programme with the students of Srijana College of Arts, Lainchaour Kathmandu, 10th March, 2021

An orientation programme with Students and teachers of Srijana College of Fine Arts was conducted on 11th March, 2021 at STAC. the Main objective of the programme was to sensitize the students about the World TB Day and SAARC TB Day and to inform them about the Painting Competition that was going to be held on 19th March, 2021. The students were informed about the theme of the World TB Day and explained how to develop the themes into a painting. The theme for the Competition was “**The Clock is Ticking**” (संकेत समयको क्षयरोग अन्त्यको) for the year 2021. The orientation programme was chaired by Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director STAC and the following were presented in the progamme.

- Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC
- Dr. Virender Singh Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC
- Dr. Vithal Prasad. Myneedu, Senior Microbiologist, STAC
- Mr. Roshan Bhandari, Assistant Professor, Sirjana School of Fine Arts, Kathmandu
- Mr. Devendra Pandey, Assistant Professor, Sirjana School of Fine Arts, Kathmandu
- STAC Officials
- Students, Sirjana School of Fine Arts, Kathmandu

Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC delivered his welcome remarks by extending warm welcome to the lecturers and student in the orientation programme. He highlighted the importance of the commemoration of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day 2021.

Dr. V.S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC made his presentation on the introduction of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and the global situation as well as the situation of tuberculosis in the SAARC Region. He highlighted about the themes on which the participants of the painting competition should focus on.

Painting competition among the students of Sirjana college of fine arts Kathmandu on 19th March 2021



On the commemoration of World TB and SAARC TB Day 2021, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) had invited the students from Sirjana College of Fine Arts, Kathmandu for a Painting Competition on 19th March 2021. The theme of the Painting Competition was “The Clock is Ticking” (“संकेतसमयको क्षयरोग अन्त्यको”)



Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, and officials of STAC, welcome all students from the Sirjana College of Fine Arts participated in the Painting Competition at STAC on the commemoration of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day. The Competition started from 9.00am and ended at 1.00pm. The Competition was

supervised by the teachers of the college and independent experts from the TB programmes. A formal closing ceremony was held after the completion of the Painting

Competition.

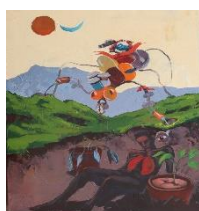
Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, National TB Control Centre chaired the closing ceremony. Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, Dr. Virender Singh Salhotra, Deputy Director, Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Senior Microbiologist of STAC, teachers of Sirjana College of Fine Arts, Officials of STAC and the participating students attended the closing ceremony.



Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Senior Microbiologist, STAC delivered the welcome remarks to all the participants attended in the Painting Competition. He explained that this Competition was organized on the eve of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day 2021, the most important day which is recognized internationally to commemorate and fight against this deadly killer disease known

as tuberculosis. The joint team of judges selected the winner of the Painting Competition.

The winner of the Competition was awarded with first, second and third position with certificate and cash prizes. All the participants were also awarded with participant certificate. Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, National TB Control Centre, NTCC and Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC handed over the awards and the certificates and the cash prizes to the winners of the Painting Competition and to the participating students also. Mr. Bewak Lama, Mr. Kshitiz Limbu and Mr. Spanden Pyakural were declared first, second and third position in the Painting Competition and their paintings are as under:



First Art



Second Art



Third Art

Mr. Bewak Lama, participating student from Sirjana College of Fine Arts shared his feeling about the Painting Competition on behalf of all the participants and the winner of the Competition.

Mr. Roshan Bhandari, Assistant Professor, Sirjana College of Fine Arts delivered his

remarks by thanking SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre for providing such a wonderful opportunity for the aspirant artist to show their talents.

Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, National TB Control Centre, (NTCC) congratulated the participating students for taking their active participation in the Painting Competition.

Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC delivered the vote of thanks. He thanked the Director of National TB Control Centre for chairing the closing ceremony, teachers and students of Sirjana College of Fine Arts, Kathmandu for their active participation in the Painting Competition in spite of their busy schedule.

Joint function with National TB Control Centre, Nepal

On commemoration of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day on 24th March 2021, the National Tuberculosis Control Centre, NTCC Nepal and SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre jointly organized a Programme in the STAC Hall II. The Programme was chaired by Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director General, Department of Health Service, Ministry of Health, Government of Nepal and the Hon'ble Member of Federal Parliament Mr. Mahesh Basnet, graced the function as chief Guest and inaugurated the programme by pouring water a flowerpot.

Mr. Muktinath Khanal MESR Section Chief, NTCC gave his welcome remarks.

Mr. Ismail Mamdhoo, Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat representing H.E. SAARC Secretary General, Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, National Tuberculosis Control Centre, Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, (STAC) and Mr. Mukti Nath Khanal, MESR Section Chief, NTCC along with senior officials from National Tuberculosis Control Centre and other stakeholders Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC had addressed the Programme by giving a presentation on the global situation of tuberculosis in the world and in the SAARC region.

Dr. Anuj Bhattachan, Director, NTCC, presented the executive summary of annual progress of TB Program for last year as way forward.

Mr. Ismail Mamdhoo, Director, Social Affairs, SAARC, addressed the function by reading out the message issued by H.E. Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General,

SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu on the occasion of World TB Day and SAARC TB Day - 2021.

As chief Guest, Hon'ble Member of Federal Parliament Mr. Mahesh Basnet delivered his speech. He reiterated the expansion of awareness programme and political commitment which is crucial for National TB Control Programmes.

Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal delivered the closing remarks.

4 Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2021

Awareness programme with the students of Sagarmatha Multiple College, Dilli bazar, Kathmandu (1st December, 2021 with the Theme of “End inequalities, End AIDS”



Introduction

An awareness programme was held on World AIDS Day 2021 with the theme “End inequalities’, End AIDS” (असमानता हटाऊ, एड्स अन्त्य गरौ) on 1st December, 2021 at Sagarmatha Multiple College, Dilli Bazar, Kathmandu with the objectives to sensitize the students about the situation of HIV/AIDS in Global, Regional and National level. The programme was chaired by Mr. Devi Bhakta Devkota, Principal, SM College. Dr. Tara Nath Pokhrel, Director, STAC, Dr. Virendra Singh Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC and Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer STAC was also present in the programme.

World AIDS Day on 1st of December brings together people from around the world to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. The day demonstrate international solidarity in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic. The day is an opportunity for various governmental national, international organization public to spread awareness about the status of HIV/AID.

The Theme of the World AIDS Day 2021 was “**End inequalities, End AIDS**”. This signifies a push towards greater access to prevention treatment and service for People living with HIV(PLHIV).



The theme of World AIDS Day 2021 was “End inequalities. End AIDS”. Inequality persists very where whether it be in prevention, treatment and services. Decades of evidence and experience in HIV research, prevention and treatment has shown that inequalities are the major barriers to achieve the global targets for HIV prevention in 2020. The major reason behind inequalities is the stigma, discrimination and HIV related criminalization. These factor enhance people’s vulnerability to acquire HIV and make people living with HIV more likely todie of AIDS-related illnesses.

The thirtieth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) recognized the need for commemorating the World AIDS Day and recommended for its observation. In accordance with the decision of the Governing Board, to observe the World AIDS Day 2021, a one day programme for students and teachers was jointly organized by Sagarmatha Multiple College and STAC in Kathmandu, Nepal on 1st of December 2021.

General Objective:

To enhance the awareness on important aspects of HIV/AIDS among school students and teachers.

Specific Objectives:

- To Commemorate World AIDS Day.
- To enhance awareness about HIV/AIDS on World AIDS Day 2021
- To disseminate information on HIV/AIDS.

Participants:

A total of 100 students including teachers from Sagarmatha Multiple College took part in the programme and staff from STAC, also participated in the programme.

Methodology

The following methodologies was adopted during the programme;

- Deliberation of lectures pertaining to HIV/AIDS, updates
- Quiz program during the session
- Multi-media presentations on HIV/AIDS
- Open discussion regarding various issues on HIV/AIDS.
- Distribution of certificates to HIV/AIDS to all participation of the program.
- Distribution of STAC Mug and Chocolates to winner of the Quiz.

Proceedings of the programme:

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) commemorated the 34th World AIDS Day 2021 with the theme “**End inequalities, End AIDS**” by jointly organizing an awareness programme on HIV/AIDS for students and teachers at Sagarmatha Multiple College Dillibazar, on 1st December 2021. The programme was commenced after registration of the participants.

Dr. Tara Nath Pokharel, Director, STAC started programme by delivering welcome speech. He also highlighted the importance of the programme and he also explain about the COVID 19 and its effects to the general public. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC started Quiz programme and he explain about the HIV/AIDS related issues and He also highlighted the importance of the programme.



Dr. Prajjwol Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC gave a presentation on “Introduction of the theme of World AIDS Day 2021 and General Information and HIV updates HIV. He presented the Theme of World AIDS Day 2021, and explained the General information and HIV/AIDS updates. He highlighted the mode of transmission, symptoms, ways of prevention etc. During the presentation, the global, regional and country level burden of HIV/AIDS was also discussed.

Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director, STAC gave a presentation and plays the Quiz to the students”. Mr. Devi Bhakta Devkota, Principal, SM College delivered his remarks. He expressed his appreciation by thanking the STAC Director and his team for organizing the awareness programme on the commemoration of World AIDS Day 2021. especially thanked Dr. Tara Nath Pokharel, Director and SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre for providing this opportunity to the students of SM College. He requested the students to take active participation in the awareness programme and be well informed about this disease. He highlighted the importance about understanding the AIDS disease and its challenges in treatment as well as the social stigma it carries within the society.

Mr. Dendra Subba, STAC Official delivered the vote of thanks. He extended heartfelt thanks to Mr. Devi Bhakta Devkota, principal, SM College, Teachers and Staff and the College Management for providing the opportunity to commemorate World AIDS Day 2021 with the students. He also thanked students for their active participation in the programme. He also thanked SM College for providing the hall and to conduct the awareness programme.



Outcomes of the programme:

- Created awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and services to the +2 level students (10-19 Age)

- Availability of a group of motivated students and teachers to improve the level of awareness among people in the community.
- To initiate partnership of collaboration STAC and various educational institute in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur district.

The programme ended by having group photo and refreshments.



5. Celebration of SAARC Charter Day 2021

The SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) celebrated SAARC Charter Day every year by organizing awareness and advocacy programmes for TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter was signed on 8 December, 1985. The Charter reflects the regions shared vision and mutual pursuit to promote peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia through promotion of economic growth, social progress, and cultural development. It also focuses on the concentrated efforts, collaboration and cooperation among the member states of SAARC.



In compliance of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), the Centre organized an “Interaction Programme with Public Health/Community Medicine Graduates of Kathmandu University of Dhulikhel on TB and HIV/AIDS” at Dhulikhel Hospital, Dhulikhel, Kavre on 22 December, 2021.

Objectives:

- To celebrate SAARC Charter Day
- To enhance awareness about SAARC and its Activities
- To enhance awareness about TB and HIV/AIDS on World AIDS Day
- To disseminate updated information on TB and HIV/AIDS

Participants:

Over 45 Public Health/Community Medicine Graduates of Kathmandu University, Lecturer of Kathmandu University, Representative of NTCC, Nepal, NCASC Nepal, Representative of WHO Nepal and officials of STAC attended the event.

Programme Report:

Dr. Anup Bastola, STAC Director, delivered and welcomed all the officials and presented on Introduction of SAARC” that included its principle, the areas of cooperation under SAARC, overview of STAC and its role for prevention, control, and elimination of Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in the region.

Dr. Naven Prakash Shah, National TB Control Center, Nepal, addressed the current situation of TB in Nepal and its management.

Dr. Pawan Shah, representative of National Center for AIDS and STD Control, Nepal, shared current situation of HIV / AIDS in Nepal and its management. Representative of WHO Nepal shared global and regional situation of TB and HIV targets, Strategic plans and commitments.

Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC highlighted current situation of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Member States, their strategic plans, best practices and role of STAC in the elimination of TB and the end of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region. He also mentioned the area where Community Medicine/Public Health Graduated can contribute in control/elimination of TB and HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Region.

After completion of the presentation, an interaction programme was led by Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Deputy Director- STAC. Community Medicine/Public Health Graduates actively participated in the interaction programme where they shared their insights and queries. Dr. Bikash Karmacharya, HoD, Community Medicine/Public Health, Kathmandu University thanked STAC for organizing a fruitful programme which was beneficial for the students of Community Medicine/Public Health Graduates. He assured that the graduates will contribute from their side in prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in Nepal and across the Region.

Dr. Anup Bastola, Director, STAC delivered his closing remarks and thanked all the officials and graduates from the Kathmandu University, NTCC, NCASC for their active participation, regardless of their busy schedule. He also expressed his appreciation to all STAC staff for their dedicated efforts to organize and successfully execute the programme.

6. Skill Development Training of General Service Staff (STAC) 2021

Training on Research Overview and Data Management and Analysis by using SPSS, 10-15 January, 2021, STAC

As per the approved calendar of activities of 2021, the activity titled “Skill development of GSS by conducting Training/attending field related Training/Workshops/Conference etc.”, a training on Research overview and Training of Data Management and Analysis by using SPSS: was conducted from 10-15 January, 2021 at conference hall II of STAC.

Objective:

To enhance the knowledge and skill on research overview and data management and hands on training to do the data analysis by using the software SPSS.

Participants:

GSS from grade I to grade III participated in the training. The names of the participants are as given below;

1. Mr. Krishna Bdr. Basnet, Admin. Officer
2. Mrs. Meena Kumari Dhakal, SPA
3. Mr. Yogendra Bdr. Mahata, Computer Technician,
4. Mr. Sanjeeb Kumar Jha, Statistician,
5. Mrs. Srijana Dhakal, PA,
6. Mr. Dipendra Subba, Librarian
7. Mr. Abdul Sheikh Majeed, Accountant,
8. Mr. Hari Krishna Maharjan, Computer Assistant,
9. Mr. Rajesh Chaudhary, Admin. Assistant,
10. Mr. Bishnu Bdr. Kunwar, Lab. Technician)

Facilitators/Recourse Persons:

Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal Director and Dr. Rabeya Sultana Facilitated the training Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC and Prof. Naveen Shrestha acted as Resource Person for the training.

Methodology of the Programme:

- I. Power Point Presentation.
- II. Discussion.
- III. Practical sessions

Day I

Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal welcomed all the participants and resource person and he highlighted the objectives of training.

The morning session started with Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC with the presentation on Overview of Research Process and variable & scales of measurement.

Prof. Naveen Shrestha presented and discussed-“Introduction to Different Software’s used in Data management, analysis and introduction for Basic Concept of EPI DATA and SPSS package”.

Day II

Morning session: Presentation on Data Management Conceptualization- During the session he explained about Data, Nature of Data, Sources of Data, Origin of Data, Metadata, Management of Data, Data Processing etc. and Preparation of Data Entry as appeared in the filled questionnaire including Data Coding, Data Editing & Cleaning.

Prof. Naveen Shrestha, taught the participants about the brief introduction of Epi-data Software and Data Entry Practices with coding, Decoding, Recording and Data Transformation.

Day III

Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC made his presentation in details what is Data Analysis approaches, which covered Data Analysis plan, Cross Sectional Descriptive Studies, Cross Sectional Analytical Studies, Case Control Study, Cohort Study in details, Statistical measures, Statistical Analysis and measures of locations “Central Tendency” etc..

Prof. Naveen Shrestha, gave the lectures on Data Editing and Data Cleaning with practical approaches.

Day IV

Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC made his detailed presentations about Uni-Variate Analysis and the session followed by the interactions with participants.

Prof. Naveen Shrestaha, practically demonstrated how to do Uni-Variate Analysis in SPSS and involved all the participants to do Uni-Varaite Analysis.

Day V

Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC made his presentation about Bi-Variate Analysis. In his second presentation, he highlighted the presentation of data (table, graphs, charts, Bar-diagrams etc.).

Prof. Naveen Shrestha, presented different types of Graphs and practically demonstrated the Bar, Pile, Line, exporting graphs, tables and missing data practices etc.

Day VI

Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC made his presentation about Multi-Variate Analysis, which covered Multi-Variate Analysis means, steps to do Bi-Variate Analysis with examples, Bi-Variate Distribution, Multi-Variate Distribution with examples, stratified analysis and interpretation, how to review outcome variables, how to apply logistic regression. He also gave the presentation on Ethics in Data Management and Analysis. Prof. Naveen Shrestha, practically demonstrated how Bi-Variate Analysis practical and review of analysis.

Outcome

The participants got the basic knowledge and skills on Research Process, data entry in EpiData software and Data Management and Analysis process using SPSS.

Closing

Dr. Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, STAC recognized the resource persons for their time and effort to make the training interactive and easy understandable. He mentioned that despite having different background and a heterogeneous group of participants, the training materials and agenda were well organized and carefully chosen to make the training useful. He wished that the primary skills would be useful for all the staff. He also acknowledged the support of staffs who worked behind the scene. Furthermore the participants who had been very enthusiastic to learn and participated actively.

The training closed by distributing the certificate.

7. Research conducted in 2021 funded by STAC

- i. Study-Tracing the Possible Source of Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), Bhutan 2021
- ii. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on directly observed treatment Short Course (DOTS) Programme for Tuberculosis in Nepal
- iii. Call for EoI from Member States for small scale research grants.
 - a) SARS-COV-2 and TB co-infection among current TB patients in Chennai
 - b) Morbidity and mortality related to COVID-19 among HIV infected individuals in selected ART sites of Kathmandu valley, SAIFRN, Nepal
 - c) Assessment of nutritional status of pulmonary TB patients who have received Nikshay Poshan yojana scheme residing in Ramanagara District, India by using N-TB mobile application- A cross-sectional study.

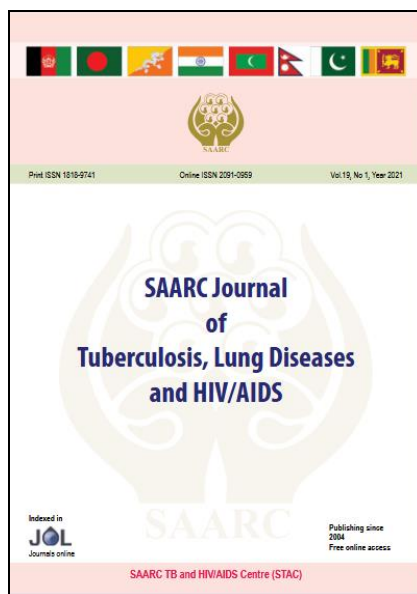
8. Regular works/activities in SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS and Procurement of Laboratory consumables

A team from M/S HITES consisting of one Biomedical Engineer, Civil engineer and Technical person carried our site visit for detailed assessment of lab for the requirement of civil/electrical modifications, plumbing, generators and backup UPS etc. and they also had detailed discussion with STAC team on other technical and managerial issues for development of Tender Document and facilitating the tender process in the 3rd week of November, 2021 at STAC's cost. After detailed discussion following activities worked out.

- i. The HITES sent us the updated tender document with new estimates. In the first quarter of 2022.
- ii. The cost estimates prepared by HITES in the draft tender document are observed far exceeding the budget available for the SNRL project works.
- iii. Due to high cost estimates for civil and electrical works, the STAC is coordinating with the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (BUDBC), Government of Nepal for local estimates for civil/modification works especially for BSL3 lab.
- iv. Got the estimate from BUDBC, the estimates are lower than the estimates submitted by M/S HITES.
- v. The same was communicated to M/S HITES for re-estimating the civil and electrical works for BSL-3 laboratory.

- vi. The Centre has received the revised estimates along with complete draft tender document.
- vii. The Centre analyzed the final draft documents received from HITES and observed that there will be shortfall of budget against the approved budget for the SNRL project.

9. Publication of “SAARC Journals of TB Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS” Vol. 19. No. 1. 2021

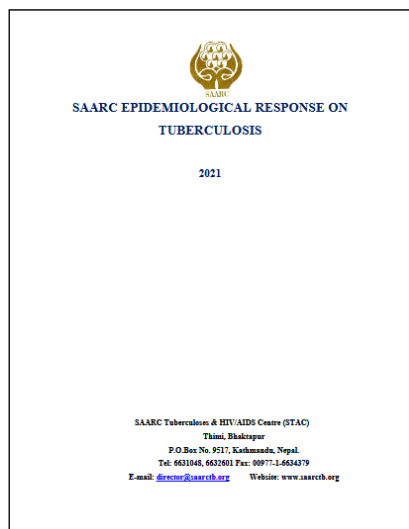


The following six articles were reviewed by external reviewers and published in Vol. 19, No. 1 2021;

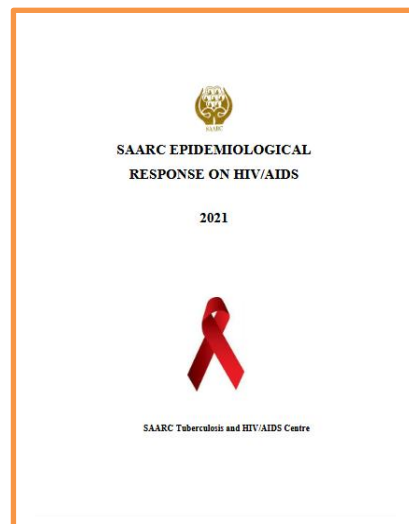
- 1) Additional Yield of Active Case Finding Through House Hold Survey in Selected District of Kabul, Afghanistan, 2018
- 2) A Systematic Review on the Diagnostic Accuracy of Line Probe Assay in the Rapid Diagnosis of Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in India Scenario
- 3) Comparison of CD4 and CD8 Counts in HIV Negative Pulmonary Tuberculosis Patients with Normal Healthy Controls in and around Prayagraj
- 4) A Military Tuberculosis: A Descriptive Study in West Gujarat
- 5) Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on TB Control Programmes in Nepal: An Overview
- 6) High Flow Nasal Cannula for Management of Tuberculosis ARDS in Immunocompromised- A vision or an Illusion?

10. e-Publication of SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis 2021 and SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS 2021.

The document titled “SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS 2021” was prepared and published on the official website of STAC (www.saarctb.org).



SAARC Epidemiological Response on TB 2021



SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS 2021

11. Courtesy visit of STAC Director Dr. Anup Bastola to SAARC Secretariat

Dr. Tara Nath Pokhrel, Director, STAC made a courtesy visit to His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General, SAARC Secretariat on 29th October, 2021. During the courtesy visit the Director (STAC), briefed His Excellency about the Centre.



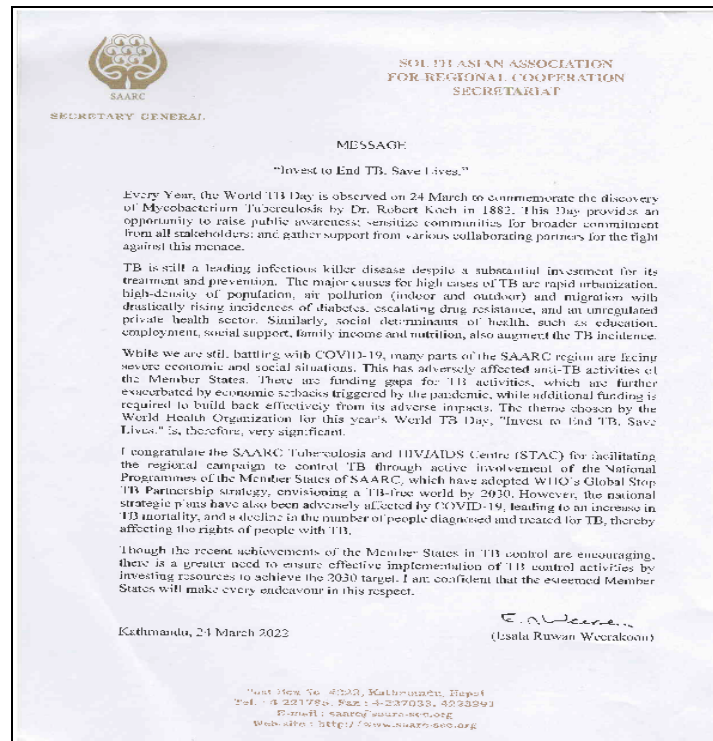
Annual Report 2022

1. Commemoration of World TB Day 2022

On the Occasion of World TB Day-2022, His Excellency the Secretary General, SAARC had issued a Message, which was disseminated through Website/Email for Media Coverage. The technical and physical support was provided by STAC Officials to NTCC for organizing World TB Day event on 24th March, 2022 at STAC and the Chief Guest was Hon'ble Mr. Birodha Khatiwada, Minister, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal. Participants from national and international organization working of TB in Nepal were present.

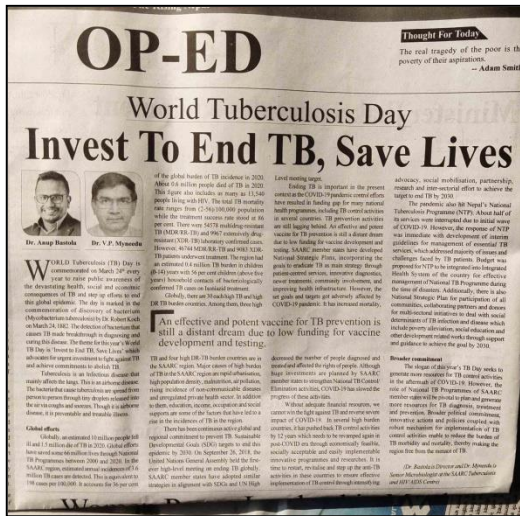


Message from His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC



Publication of Articles to dissemination of information and sensitize wider public.

The following articles written by Director and Professionals of STAC were published in National Daily News Paper.



Invest to End TB, SAVE LIVES,
Published in the Rising Nepal on 24th
March, 2022

(क्षयरोग अन्त्यका लागि लगानी)- published in
Kantipur Daily on 24th March, 2022

World TB Day-2022

SAARC Factsheet on Tuberculosis

Situation of Tuberculosis
Globally, an estimated 10.0 million people fell ill with TB (127 cases per 100 000 Population) in 2020, a number that has been declining very slowly in recent years. 6.1 million Cases were notified in 2020 across the globe which means there was a gap of 3.9 million (39%) between incident and notified cases.

In the SAARC region, an estimated 3.6 million people fell ill with TB (198 cases per 100 000 Population). In 2020, 2.4 million TB cases were notified in the SAARC region, which means there was a gap of 1.2 million (33%) between incident and notified cases. There were an estimated 0.6 million deaths from TB. For the cases notified in 2019 in the SAARC region, the treatment success rate was 86%.

TB Control Indicators	Global	SAARC	% of Global
Estimated Population	7768 million	1856 million	24
Estimated Incidence (127 cases/100 000)	10 million	3.6 million	36
Estimated Deaths due to TB (1.5 million)	1.5 million	0.6 million	41
Total cases notified (6.1 million)	6.1 million	2.4 million	39
New and relapse notified cases (8.8 million)	8.8 million	2.2 million	25
Treatment Success Rate (COST collect)	86%	86%	
Patients with Known HIV Status who are HIV Positive	0.37 million	0.031 million	8
Patients with Known HIV Status who are HIV Positive on ART	0.33 million (88%)	0.029 million (94%)	9

Source: www.who.int/data/tb-country-regional-and-global-profiles

Estimates of TB incidence in the SAARC Region, 2020

Country	Population ('000)	Best Estimate	Uncertainty interval	Best Estimate	Uncertainty interval
Afghanistan	38000	75000	40000-107000	193	124-276
Bangladesh	165000	360000	270000-462000	218	164-291
Bhutan	770	1300	970-1600	165	126-206
India	1380000	2700000	1700000-3500000	188	126-257
Maldives	540	100	100-200	175	70-46
Nepal	28000	60000	41000-100000	215	139-336
Pakistan	221000	370000	400000-760000	250	185-340
Sri Lanka	21000	40000	30000-50000	184	47-84
Total	1856110	3602100		198	

Source: WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2021
*Data are by National Tuberculosis control programme of SAARC Member States
** Per 100 000 population

- ◆ The SAARC region, with an estimated annual incidence of 3.6 million TB cases equivalent to 198 cases per 100,000, accounted for 26% of the global burden of TB incidence in 2020.
- ◆ Three of eight Member States in the SAARC Region are high TB burden countries and four of eight member States are high MDR-TB burden countries among 30 high burden countries.
- ◆ India accounted for 26%, Pakistan 5.7% and Bangladesh 3.6% of the world's TB Cases.
- ◆ An estimated 0.6 million (34 cases per 100,000) TB deaths occurred in the region in 2020.

Fact Sheet on TB was disseminated through its website.

2. Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2022

The Director and staff members of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) participated in a rally organized by the National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal in Kathmandu on the occasion of 35th World AIDS Day on 1st December, 2022 with slogan “**To keep Everyone Safe, To protect Everyone’s Health, We need to Equalize**”. The event was organized under the guardianship of the Director General of the Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Population. The Director of STAC also addressed the event.



3. Participation in the NTPs/NACPs Meeting in the Member States by STAC

- i. At the invitation of National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL), the Director and Sr. Microbiologist participated in the meeting titled “Coordination and Review on Public Health Laboratory” organized by NPHL & contributed on behalf of STAC on 21-22 March, 2023, Dhulikhel, Kavre, Nepal.
- ii. At the invitation of National HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Government of Nepal, Dr. Anup Bastola Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) participated in the Review workshop of National Strategic Plan for Viral Hepatitis organized by National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Government of Nepal & contributed on behalf of STAC and on 12-13 April, 2022, Dhulikhel, Kavre, Nepal.
- iii. At the invitation of National TB Control Programme, Nepal, Dr. Anup Bastola, Director, STAC and Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the event of launching of National Strategic Plan (2078/79-82/83) of National TB Control Programme of Nepal.

4. Participation in the meeting of collaborating Institutions (International/Regional)

- i. At the invitation of Ministry of Health and Population of Government of Nepal, Director, STAC participated in the Data Review and result dissemination of CAPTURA project.
- ii. At the invitation of WHO, Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the WHO Technical Advisory Group on TB Diagnostics and Laboratory Strengthening through Virtually on 22 June, 2022 and the outcome of the Meeting was preparedness of Programmatic Standards for TB Diagnosis.
- iii. At the invitation of WHO, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the WHO TAG Meeting-Diagnostic Roadmap through virtually on 27th June, 2023. Outcome of the Meeting was development of Diagnostic Roadmap to increase access and use of WHO-recommended rapid diagnostics (WRDs).

5. Facilitate the NTPs/NACPs and other National/ International Programmes in the Member States by STAC

- i. Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the WHO/SEARO Capacity building workshop on drug-susceptibility testing (DST) for new and repurpose drugs for MDR-TB from 25th April – 4th May, 2022 New Delhi, India as resource person.
- ii. Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the master trainers meeting , interaction and case discussion on 20th May, 2022 Kathmandu, Nepal organized by NTCC, Nepal as facilitator.
- iii. Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the CME programme on “Challenges in Managing Childhood Tuberculosis” on 21st May, 2022 Kathmandu organized by NTCC/Nepal Pediatric Society as a facilitator.
- iv. Dr. Vithal Prasad, Sr. Microbiologist, STAC participated in the following programmes as resource person conducted by the NTCC Nepal on different date;
 - Workshop on TB Laboratory Diagnostic Strengthening TB lab diagnosis capacity
 - Interaction Programme for Strengthening TB laboratory System in Nepal
 - ToT on TB Laboratory Services/Lab Technical personnel.
 - ToT on Treatment and Management of Tuberculosis for Medical Officers

v. Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC participated in the conference “NCD Community to Policy: Accelerating the action” on Date: 13th to 15th August 2022
Organizer: Nepalese Society of Community Medicine (NESCOM).

vi. Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC, Mrs. Meena Dhakal, SPA, STAC and Mr. Deependra Subba, Librarian, STAC participated in Capacity Building Workshop on Alcohol Regulation and Control on 19th October 2022.
Organizer: World Health Organization, Country Office, Nepal

vii. Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel participated as Mentor in Workshop of Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP) on 3rd to 4th November 2022
Organizer: National Health Training Centre, Teku, Kathmandu, Nepal

Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel participated as facilitator in Provincial Training Programme of Rapid Response Team, Dhangadhi, Nepal on 23rd to 27th November 2022.
Organizer: Epidemiological and Disease Control Division, Teku, Kathmandu, Nepal

viii. Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC attended as Resource Person in Provincial Training Programme for Rapid Response, Kaski, Nepal on 12th to 17th December 2023
Organizer: Epidemiological and Disease Control Division, Teku, Kathmandu, Nepal

ix. Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC participated as Facilitator in Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP) course 1st round, Surkhet, Nepal on 23rd to 28th December 2022
Organizer: National Health Training Centre, Teku, Nepal

6. Publication of “SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS” Vol. 22. No. 1. 2022.



The following articles were reviewed by internal and external reviewers for publishing of first issue of the SAARC Journal of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS Vol. 22 No. 1 2022.

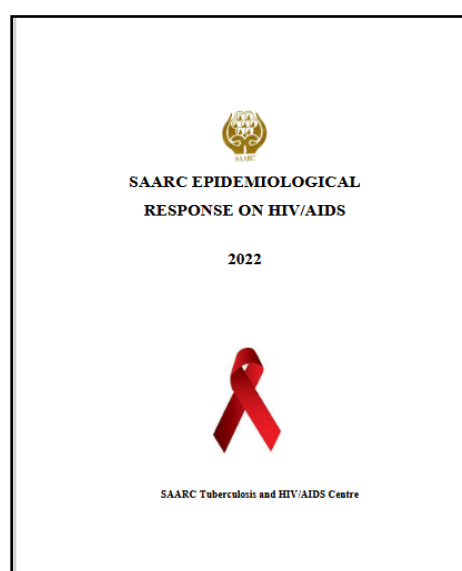
- i. Tuberculosis Sanatorium of 21st Century-Exploring the Admission Pattern and Duration of Stay at Tuberculosis Sanatorium Bhowali, Uttarkhand, India: A Retrospective Study.
- ii. Impact of Strategic Adaptations Due to COVID-19 Pandemic on a Capacity Building Program: Insights from a DRTB Project in India
- iii. Descriptive Analysis of the Patients with Post COVID Interstitial Lung Diseases in a Resource Poor Setting of Central Sri Lanka.
- iv. Comparison of GeneXpert MTB/RIF Assay and AFB Smear Microscopy in Diagnosis of Pulmonary Tuberculosis among HIV Patients at a Tertiary Care Hospital.
- v. COVID-19 in ART Naïve HIV Positive Adult: Course of Presentation and Management.
- vi. Disseminated Histoplasmosis in HIV-patient in Nepal: A Case Report.

7 e-Publication of SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection 2022 and SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS 2022.

The document “SAARC Epidemiological response on Tuberculosis & SAARC Epidemiological on HIV/AIDS 2022” was developed and uploaded in STAC’s Website.



SAARC Epidemiological
Response on TB 2022



SAARC Epidemiological Response
on HIV/AIDS 2022

8. WHO Collaborative Centre related works

WHO Collaborative Centre Annual Report

- i. The Annual Progress Report of WHO Collaborative Centre (July, 2021-June, 2022) was reported to WHO according to their prescribed format.
- ii. **Finalization of TOR and list of the activities for 2022-2026**

In close collaboration/consultation, the Centre prepared finalized and submitted TOR/Work plan for re-designation of STAC as WHO collaborating Centre for TB/HIV Training and Research for another term.

9. Other Activities

Courtesy visit of STAC Director Dr. Anup Bastola to SAARC Secretariat

Dr. Anup Bastola, Director, STAC made a courtesy visit to His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General, SAARC Secretariat on 8th July, 2022. During the courtesy visit the Director (STAC), briefed His Excellency about the Centre.



Courtesy visit of STAC Director Ms. Yasoda Aryal to SAARC Secretariat

Ms. Yasoda Aryal, Director, STAC made a courtesy visit to His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General, SAARC Secretariat on 15th November, 2022. During the courtesy visit the Director (STAC), briefed His Excellency about the Centre.



10. Audit of Accounts of STAC for the year 2020 and 2021

A joint audit of the year 2020 & 2021 (JAT 20/21) comprising auditors Mr. Shyam Prasad Bhandari, Director, Auditor General Office, Nepal and Mr. Nazar Muhammad, Director General Audit, Auditor General of Pakistan, carried out the audit of the accounts and related activities of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre for the year 2020 and 2021, on 25-27 July, 2022.

Annual Report 2023

1. Commemoration of World TB Day / SAARC TB Day 2023



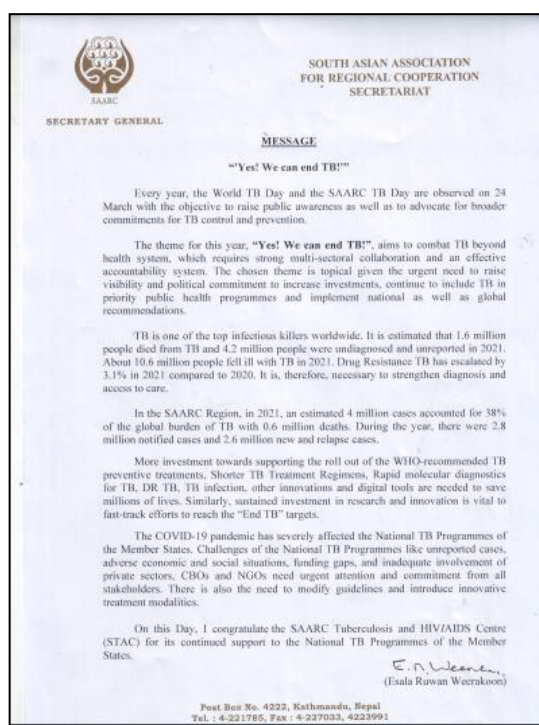
SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) is commemorating World TB Day every year. This year the day was observed with various activities designed to move forward public awareness and momentum gain about TB and its control in the Community throughout the SAARC Region. The Theme of the day was-

“We can Eliminate Tuberculosis “. The Technical and Physical support was provided by STAC Officials to NTCC for organizing

World TB Day event on 24th March, 2023 at NTCC, Thimi, Bhaktapur and Participants from national and international organizations working for TB in Nepal were present in the program.



Message from His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General of SAARC on the Occasion of World TB Day / SAARC TB Day, 2023.



Publication of Articles for dissemination of information and sensitize wider public.

The following article written by Professionals of STAC were published in daily National News Papers; we can Eliminate Tuberculosis (English), Published in the Rising Nepal on 24th March, 2023.

THE RISING NEPAL
ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

We Can Eliminate Tuberculosis

Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneddu
Dr. Prajwal Pyakurel

Let us join forces on this World TB Day, and call for an end to excuses and delays in prioritising investments and action to end one of the world's top infectious killers.

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is celebrated on March 24 every year. The World Health Organization (WHO) theme for World TB Day 2022 is "We can end TB". It aims to inspire hope and encourage high-level leadership, investment, better uptake of new guidelines, adoption of innovations and accelerated action to combat the TB epidemic. This year is critical, with opportunities to cross existing and political commitments at the 2021 UN High Level Meeting on TB. In 2002, the United States discovered the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and treating TB and disease. The world began to mark TB Day in memory of this medical breakthrough.

TB is still one of the leading infectious killers in the world. Globally, an estimated 10 million people fall ill and 1.6 million deaths occurred due to TB in the year 2021. In the SAARC region, an estimated 4 million cases occurred for 38 per cent of the global burden of TB with 1.6 million deaths reported in 2021. There were 2.8 million new and relapse cases and 2.6 million new and relapse cases. Among the high TB TB burden countries, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the SAARC member states account for high TB and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are TB high burden countries.

Burden
Major reasons behind high burden of TB in the SAARC region is due to the fact that this region represents many of the drivers of the modern TB epidemic such as rapid urbanisation, high density populations, malnutrition, HIV, air pollution, rising incidence of diabetes and unmet

prison wear. Additionally, social determinants of health such as education, income and social support also contribute to increase in incidence of TB in the region. Furthermore, the TB burden is becoming resistant to drugs, longer treatment duration, less effective and with more side effects, less compliance on the part of patients to treatment and failure of management of TB in the programs exist.

In 2001, the WHO declared TB a public health emergency and called upon all governments to scale up TB control activities. Since then, the WHO, the United Nations, national governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) increased their commitments. Global efforts have resulted in an estimated 40 million lives saved. On September 8, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly held the first-ever high level meeting (UN HLM) on ending Tuberculosis. All SAARC countries also have pledged to end TB in their respective countries by 2035.

The spotlight of World TB Day will be on ending tuberculosis to ramp up progress in the lead up to the 2021 UN High Level Meeting on TB. The commitment needed this year are:

High level leadership and action to end TB and the adoption of TB policies, and national care for their citizens. Increase collective responsibility by more investment of resources, support and sustaining the TB services to combat TB and lead to Universal Health Coverage.

Urgent investment of resources, support, care and information that is vital to ensure national access to TB care for research. More investments in introduction of newer guidelines and research aimed to fast-track efforts to meet the target. Health authorities should redouble efforts to all health to support essential

and TB activities are being effectively implemented by increasing laboratory, social mobilisation, programme, and more accurate efforts to achieve the target of ending the TB epidemic by 2035. Investments are needed for increasing access to rapid molecular diagnosis, effective shorter TB and TB treatment regimens, TB prevention treatment options and more for TB infection. Promotion of research, development and innovation and access to digital tools to improve health outcomes also require investment.

Decline in TB cases
In the context of Nepal, the National Strategic Plan of NTP (2021-25 to 2025-26) was developed with a budget plan of \$50 million for strengthening NTP to achieve a decrease in incidence rate of TB from 750/100,000 to 500/100,000 population by 2025-26 and patient mortality rate from 50 in 2020-21 to 20 per 100,000 by 2025-26. End TB by 2035, prevent TB by 2035, and reduce the catastrophic costs to zero on the basis of KMD TB strategy of WHO TB Free Pillars. Local level initiatives to one of these innovative activities. The governments plan to make the local government responsible for tuberculosis control activities to achieve KMD TB targets.

A high level KMD TB committee with political leadership will provide a unique opportunity to raise the profile of NTP and receive more direct high level commitments to enhance NTP through revised TB control activities to achieve goal of end the TB epidemic in Nepal by 2035 and eliminate it by 2050. We cannot later still we reach the goal and save every person, family and community impacted by this deadly disease. Let us join forces on the World TB Day, and call for an end to excuses and delays in prioritising investments and action to end one of the world's top infectious killers. "We together we can end TB!"

(Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneddu is the officer in charge of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thane Akhakhapur, Dr. Prajwal Pyakurel is a research officer at the Centre.)

e-Publication of Fact Sheet on TB was disseminated through its website.

World TB Day-2022

SAARC Factsheet on Tuberculosis

Situation of Tuberculosis
Globally, an estimated 10 million people fall ill with TB (127 cases per 100 000 Population) in 2020, a number that has been declining very slowly in recent years. 6.1 million Cases were notified in 2020 across the globe which means there was a gap of 3.9 million (39%) between incident and notified cases.

In the SAARC region, an estimated 3.6 million people fall ill with TB (198 cases per 100 000 Population). In 2020, 2.4 million TB cases were notified in the SAARC region, which means there was a gap of 1.2 million (33%) between incident and notified cases. There were an estimated 0.6 million deaths from TB. For the cases notified in 2019 in the SAARC region, the treatment success rate was 86 %.

TB Control Indicators	Global	SAARC	% of Global
Estimated Population	7766 million	1856 million	24
Estimated Incidence	10 million (127 cases/100 000)	3.6 million (198 cases/100 000)	36
Estimated Deaths (Due to TB)	1.5 million (19 cases/100 000)	0.6 million (34 cases/100 000)	41
Total cases notified	6.1 million	2.4 million	39
New and relapse notified cases	5.8 million	2.3 million	38
Treatment Success Rate (2019 context)	86%	86%	
Patients with Known HIV Status who are HIV Positive	0.37 million	0.031 million	8
Patients with Known HIV Status who are HIV Positive on ART	0.33 million (89%)	0.029 million (94%)	9

Source: www.who.int/teams/tuberculosis, regional and global profiles

Estimates of TB incidence in the SAARC Region, 2020

Country	Population (2020)	Best Estimate	Uncertainty Interval	Best Estimate	Uncertainty Interval
Afghanistan	39000	7500	4000-10700	193	124-276
Bangladesh	167000	56000	27000-82000	218	162-291
Bhutan	774	130	95-169	105	76-146
India	1380000	230000	170000-310000	166	120-222
Maldives	540	300	180-500	17	20-48
Nepal	29000	6000	4100-10400	233	170-310
Pakistan	23000	27000	20000-34000	200	167-246
Sri Lanka*	21000	1400	1000-1800	64	47-81
Total	1856014	362000		198	

Source: WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2021
*Data are for National Tuberculosis control programme of SAARC Member States
** For 100 000 population

- The SAARC region, with an estimated annual incidence of 3.6 million TB cases equivalent to 198 cases per 100,000, accounted for 36% of the global burden of TB incidence in 2020.
- Three of eight Member States in the SAARC Region are high TB burden countries and four of eight member States are high MDR-TB burden countries among 30 high burden countries.
- India accounted for 26%, Pakistan 5.7%, and Bangladesh 3.6% of the world's TB Cases.
- An estimated 0.6 million (34 cases per 100,000) TB deaths occurred in the region in 2020.

Participation in the programme of MoHP, Nepal by STAC

i. Participation in the Programme on Minimum Service and Criteria of Specialized Hospitals in Nepal

Ms. Yesoda Aryal, Director STAC participated in the “Programme on Minimum Service and Criteria of specialized Hospital in Nepal, organized by the Ministry of Health and Population on 4th January, 2023 in the Ministry of Health.

ii. Participation of the Director in the meeting on Digital Awareness (E-literacy)

Ms. Yeshoda Aryal, Director, STAC participated in the meeting on “Digital Awareness (E-literacy)” organized by the Ministry of Health and Population on 4th January, 2023 in the Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal. The meeting discussed about the digital awareness/e-literacy among the medical personnel working in the health field.

iii. Participation in the meeting of Work plan of Health Insurance in Nepal

Ms. Yeshoda Aryal, Director, STAC participated in the meeting of “Work plan of Health Insurance in Nepal” organized by Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal on 30th January, 2023 in the Ministry of Health and Population.

iv. Director, STAC along with other team of Ministry of Health and Population evaluated Minimum service standards of Narayani Hospital, Birgunj on 28th-31st May, 2023



Dr. Roshan Neupane, Director, STAC headed a seven members committee constituted by Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal evaluated & disseminated the finding of the minimum services standards of Narayani Hospital, Birgunj, Parsa District of Nepal on 28th-31st May, 2023.

2 Participation in NTPs/NACPs Meeting in the Member States by STAC

i. Participation of Director in the meeting of Global Fund Application Grant Cycle7 National Consultation on HIV/AIDS

Dr. Roshan Neupane, Director, STAC participated in the meeting on “Global Fund Application Grant Cycle 7 National Consultation on HIV/AIDS” organized by National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Nepal held in Hotel Shankar, Lazimpat on 7th July, 2023. The meeting discussed about the country dialogue process for grant cycle 7 of the Global Fund. It also discussed on the matter related to bring together key stakeholders in the field of HIV/AIDS in Nepal to strategize and develop a comprehensive funding application to be submitted to the Global Fund.

ii. Participation of Director in the TB Federal level Consultation meeting

Dr. Roshan Neupane, Director, STAC participated in the meeting organized by National Tuberculosis Control Centre, Thimi on Global Fund application Grant Cycle 7 held in Hotel Himalayan, Lalitpur on 8th July, 2023. The meeting discussed the burden of TB challenges plan to control the diseases in coming days.

iii. Workshop on National TB Preventive Treatment (TPT) Guideline, Kathmandu, Nepal

Dr. Roshan Neupane Director STAC and Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel Research Officer, STAC, participated in workshop for the finalization of TB preventative guideline organized by National Tuberculosis Control Centre on 18th October 2023. Representative from different organization such as Save the Children, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, FHI 360 participated in the programme. The program was divided in three sub-heading and feedback provided by the participants were incorporated in the guideline.

3 Participation in the meeting of collaborating Institutions (International/Regional)

i. Participation in the Global Fund Team Meeting Developing NTP Fund Requirement Assessment Briefing

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist, Deputy Director (o) participated in the virtual meeting on the **Participation in the Global Fund Team Meeting Developing NTP Fund Requirement Assessment Briefing**” on 19th January, 2023 organized by the Global Fund. The meeting highlighted on the PPM intervention, Lab Network strengthening by expanding EQA, increase training for propagating newer guidelines of TB, DRTB, and Childhood TB recording and report improvement. The Global Fund team lead by Dr. Jamie Tonsing, advisor TB, GF, Geneva, NTCC team lead by Dr. Naveen Prakash Shah and Mrs. Rita Bhandari were also present in the meeting.

ii. Participation of Sr. Microbiologist virtually on shorter TB Drug Regimens: How to improve Access or Private Providers.

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Deputy Director (o) participated in the virtual meeting on “Shorter TB Drug Regimens: How to Improve Access for Private Providers” on 2nd February, 2023. The meeting discussed on the campaign focused on access to shorter TB regimens, which is of crucial importance to offer TB patients better care by all healthcare providers (including those in the private sector). All TB workers and Free for TB Public Private Mix (PPM) members actively participated in the meeting.

iii. Workshop on Community Capacity Building for Effective Engagement towards Ending TB in SEAR

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Deputy Director (o) participated in the “Workshop on Community Capacity Building for Effective Engagement towards Ending TB in SEAR” on 13th-15th March, 2023 at Hotel Radisson, Kathmandu. The workshop discussed with the several international NTOs and Community based Organizations CBOs on the Role of NGO and CBO and their capacity build up for effective management of NTPs across South East Region. The workshop also agreed to incorporate the inputs received and prepare a common document later to be brought out by WHO (SEARO).

iv. Participation of Director in South-South Collaboration on Research and Innovation in Tuberculosis, NIRT, Chennai



Dr. Roshan Neupane, Director, STAC participated in the meeting on “South-South Collaboration on Research and Innovation in Tuberculosis” held on 11th -12th July, 2023 at the National Institute of Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Chennai.

4 Facilitate/Participation in the Programmes of the NTPs/NACPs and other National/ International Organization in the Member States by STAC

i. Participation of Sr. Microbiologist virtually on the meeting on PPM in Bangladesh and Pakistan

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Deputy Director (o) participated in the virtual meeting on the “Public Private Mix (PPM) in Bangladesh and Pakistan” on 26th January, 2023. The meeting discussed on the progress made in Bangladesh and Pakistan in engaging private healthcare providers BRAC in Bangladesh and Mercy Corps in Pakistan, as well as recommendations from the recent joint monitoring missions. The TB workers actively participated in this virtual meeting.

ii. Participation in the Monitor 2nd Round of Frontline FETP Course

Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, participated in the meeting on “Monitor 2nd Round of Frontline Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Course organized by National Health Training Centre (NHTC), Government of Nepal on 29 January 2023 to 4th February 2023 in NHTC.

iii. Participation in the Result Dissemination of Research- Addressing the Social Determination and Consequences of Tuberculosis (ASCOT). A Pilot Implementation Trail & Process Evaluation in Nepal

On the invitation of Britain Nepal Medical Trust (BNMT), the officer In-charge, Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer participated in the result dissemination of “Research- Addressing the Social Determination and Consequences of Tuberculosis (ASCOT): A pilot Implementation Trail & Process Evaluation in Nepal” held on 27th March 2023.

iv. Participation in the Conference on Addressing Global Challenges through Collaboration and Partnership in Research and Higher Education.

Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, participated in the “Conference on Addressing Global Challenges through Collaboration and Partnership in Research and Higher Education” on 29th March, 2023 organized by Dhulikhel Hospital, Nepal

v. Mentorship Orientation Workshop

Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer (RO) participated in the orientation workshop on 27 July, 2023 for Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP) Organized by National Health Training Centre (NHTC) in collaboration with Centre for disease Control (CDC) Atlanta, USA and South Asian Field Epidemiology and Technical Network (SAFETYNET). Prof. Alonson from CDC Atlanta, USA was the key facilitator for the training program.

vi. Rapid Response Training (Team), Bardibas Madesh Province, Nepal

On the invitation of Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD), Department of Health Services, Nepal, Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC participated as a resource person in the “Provincial Training Programme for rapid response team (RRT), Bardibas, Madesh Province Nepal on 28th August to 4th September 2023. It was a 5 days training program organized by Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD), Department of Health Services (DoHS), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP),

Government of Nepal (GoN). Health Professional from eight districts attended the program.

vii. The Union, World Conference on Lung Health, 2023, Paris, France

Dr. Roshan Neupane, the then Director, STAC participated in the Union World Conference organized by International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, held in Paris, France from 15-18 November, 2023. The theme for the conference was “transforming evidence into practice”.



5 Publication of “SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS” Volume 21. No.1.2023

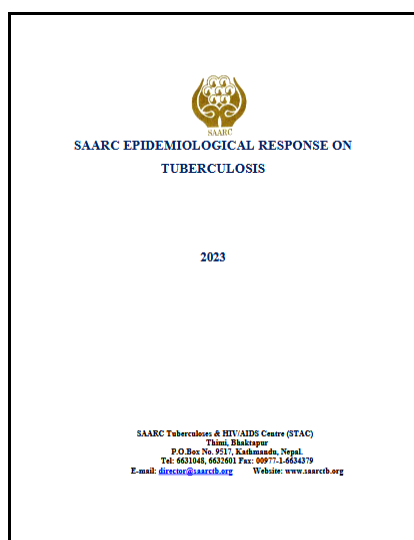


The following articles were reviewed by internal and external reviewers for publishing of first issue of the Journal of 2023 Volume 21. No.1.2023

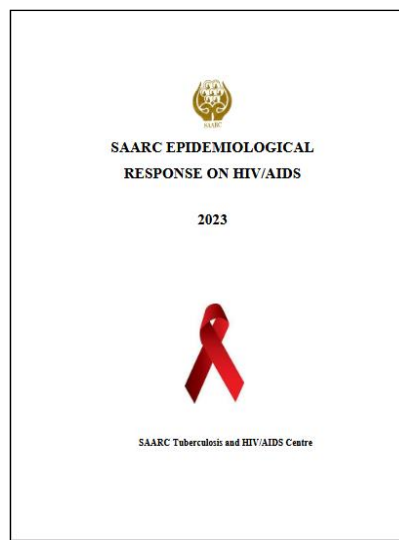
- i. Usage of N-TB Mobile Application of Evaluate the Nutritional Status of Pulmonary TB Patients enrolled under Nikshay Poshan Yojana Scheme at Ramanagara District, Karnataka- A Cross Sectional Study
- ii. Risk Factor and/or Prevalence of Tuberculosis in Nepal: A Systematic Literature Review
- iii. Morbidity and Mortality Related to COVID-19 among HIV Infected Individuals in Selected ART Sites of Kathmandu Valley
- iv. Barriers to Tuberculosis Program in Nepal During COVID-19 Pandemic: Health Service Providers' Perspectives
- v. National Commitments: creating momentum for ENDING the Tuberculosis epidemic from Nepal by 2035

6 e-Publication of SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection 2023.

The document “SAARC Epidemiological response on Tuberculosis & SAARC Epidemiological response on HIV/AIDS 2023” were developed and uploaded in STAC’s Website www.saarctb.org



SAARC Epidemiological response on Tuberculosis 2023



SAARC Epidemiological response HIV/AIDS 2023

7 Visit of Dignitaries to STAC

Visit of His Excellency Secretary General, SAARC Secretariat in STAC on 8th February 2023

On the invitation of Director, SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General along with Mr. Ismail Mamdhoo, Director, Social Affairs and Mr. Madhu Sudan Lamichanne, Administrative Officer SAARC Secretariat visited to SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre on 8th February, 2023. H.E. the Secretary General and his team were welcomed by the Director, Professionals and the GSS staff of the Centre. On this occasion, the Secretary General was briefed about the activities of the Centre by the Director, STAC. His Excellency & his team also observe the infrastructure and functioning of the Centre. His Excellency expressed his satisfaction of the progress and functioning of the Centre and assured to support the Centre in the coming days.





Dr. Prajjwal Shrestha, Director, National Tuberculosis Control Centre (NTCC), Nepal visited the STAC Office on 15th June 2023



Dr. Prajjwal Shrestha, Director, National Tuberculosis Control Centre (NTCC), Nepal made a visit to SAARC Tuberculosis Centre (STAC) on 15th June, 2023. Dr. Roshan Neupane, Director, STAC welcomed Dr. Shrestha in the Director's Chamber. He briefly highlighted the activities of the Centre. He also expressed his hope that STAC would collaboratively work with National Tuberculosis Control Centre. In response Dr. Shrestha, Director, NTCC expressed his support and hope to work together. Dr. Shrestha also observed the physical facilities available in the Centre.

Visit of Delegates from Maldives and Sri-Lanka at STAC on 23rd November 2023

A team led by Dr. Niruppa Pallawaiti, Deputy Director, National Programme for Tuberculosis and Chest Disease, Srilanka visited STAC on 23rd November 2023. The team was welcomed by the then director Dr. Roshan Neupane. He briefed the visiting delegates about the various activities conducted by STAC and extended hands for joint cooperation and collaboration for elimination of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC region.



Visit of WHO Team

Dr. Roshan Neupane, Director, STAC welcomed Prof. Dr. Suman Rijal, Director, Communicable Disease at World Health Organization, South-East Asia, Region (WHO SEARO) and Dr. Khim Pa Pa Naing, Team lead Communicable Diseases, WHO Country Office, Kathmandu, Nepal in his chamber on 24th November, 2023.



The objective of the visit was to discuss on the role that STAC has been playing as a WHO Collaborating Centre. Dr. Suman Rizal further extended his support on behalf of WHO SEARO office on the activities of STAC as a WHO Collaborating Centre. Some agendas such as research, advocacy, and role of foreign sectorial level meeting were also discussed.

Visit of Director, Social Affairs SAARC Secretariat (SA), STAC, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Shahiya Ali Manik, Director, Social Affairs (S.A.), Md. Almas Ali, Account Officer, and Mr. Mohamad Farhan Khan, Desk Officer from SAARC Secretariat visited the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre on 13th December, 2023.



Dr. Manisha Rawal, Director (STAC) welcomed the visiting team. She briefed the Team about the activities of the Centre. Ms. S.A. Manik thanked the Director for her warm welcome. She emphasized on the preparation work for the Governing Board Meeting. She also reiterated that the GB meeting was very important and it must be conducted at the earliest. Dr. M. Rawal, Director assured her that

the STAC Team will do their best to conduct the GB Meeting. The visiting team also observed the physical facility and the laboratory of the Centre.

8 Other Activities of STAC

i. Courtesy visit of STAC Director Dr. Roshan Neupane to SAARC Secretariat

Dr. Roshan Neupane Director, STAC made a courtesy visit to His Excellency Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon, Secretary General, SAARC Secretariat on 26th May, 2023. During the courtesy visit the Director (STAC), briefed His Excellency and Director (Social Affairs) about the Centre.

ii. Nomination as Peer Reviewer by M/S Elsevier for review of various Med Journals

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Deputy Director (o) participated in the virtual meeting organized by M/S Elsevier on 2nd March, 2023. He was nominated and certified as Peer Reviewer of the Med Journals. Dr. V.P. Myneedu informed the meeting that he had previously reviewed research article in the Indian Journal of Tuberculosis and the Open Microbiology Journal of BMJ also.

iii. Visit to TB Center, GENETUP, Kalimati, Kathmandu

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Deputy Director (o) and Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC, Doctors and Officials of Nepal TB Association visited to BT

Centre German-Nepal TB Project (GENETUP) on 13th March, 2023. The team reviewed the functions of the TB Center GENETUP and the routine activities of the TB Reference Laboratory. Dr. Bhawana Shrestha, In-Charge GENETUP briefed the team about the various activities done by the Center.

iv. Visit to District Health Office, Kavre, Sindhupalchowk

Dr. V.P. Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Deputy Director (O), and Dr. Prajjwal Pyakurel, Research Officer, STAC, attended the Half-Yearly Review Meeting of TB District Focal Points held from 13–15 March 2023. The half yearly review meeting focused on Planning and Monitoring workshop of NTP. The review team also included Dr. Purushotam Raj Shedain, Senior Health Administrator, from health office, Kavre palanchwok, Lab, worker, Programme coordinators of the District and Bagmati Province Health directorate.

v. Courtesy visit of STAC Director Dr. Manisha Rawal to SAARC Secretariat

On the invitation from His Excellency Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar SAARC Secretariat, Dr. Manisha Rawal, Director STAC made a courtesy visit in the SAARC Secretariat on 19th December, 2023.



On the courtesy visit, Dr. Manisha Rawal Director, STAC briefed His Excellency about the activities and challenges faced by the Centre. She also informed about the upcoming 31st Governing Board Meeting of STAC. She congratulated His Excellency for an appointment as the Secretary General of the SAARC Secretariat. His Excellency also welcomed and Congratulated Dr. Rawal on her appointment as Director, STAC. His Excellency assured that the SAARC Secretariat will always support with all matters related to the Centre and provide necessary guidance to the Centre in all its activities.

Ms. Shahiya Ali Manik, Director, Social Affairs and Mr. D. Subba, OAO, STAC were also present in the meeting.

9 Audit of Accounts of STAC for the year 2022



A Joint Audit Team (JAT 2022) comprising auditors Mr. Kaman Ali Hashmi, Director General Audit, Mr. Sammer Ahmed, Director Audit, Office of the Auditor General of Pakistan and Mr. Prem Bahadur Mungmen, Director, and Mr. Raju Pandey, Audit Officer, Office of Auditor General Nepal, carried out the audit of the account and related activities of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre for the year 2022 on 22-23 August, 2023 at STAC.