

2nd Forum of National Stop TB Partnerships from the South-East Asia, Western Pacific and Eastern Mediterranean Regions

The 2nd Forum of multiple partners working in TB care from South-East Asia, Western Pacific and Eastern Mediterranean Regions focussed on the urgency to find, treat and cure the 'missing cases' through the involvement of the private sector and wider communities. The need for sustainable financing and high level political commitment was highlighted as key in finding the three million people who do not get the TB services they need.

Organized and financially supported by the Indonesian Stop TB Partnership, the Forum represented a platform for representatives from 14 governments, NGOs, private sector and national partnerships from Afghanistan to South Korea, to meet and discuss how they can overcome their challenges in properly addressing TB.

Speaking at the opening, Mr Arifin Panigoro, Chair of the Stop TB Partnership in Indonesia and host of the meeting said, "The TB problem is aggravated due to limited finances, and a commitment is equally needed from the government and the private sector."

Dr Lucica Ditiu, the Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership said, "TB is decreasing, but so slowly that if we do not accelerate, it will take at least 180 years more to make a memorable difference. We all want zero TB deaths and the first step in this direction is to find and treat every single individual infected or sick with TB and leave no one behind. If we want to do so, working in partnerships with private sector, communities and governments will be the only solution."

"It is imperative that we accelerate progress to address fundamental challenges like MDR-TB and TB-HIV. Now is the time for innovations to be put in practice and an opportunity to call on all partnerships to fight the TB epidemic in an organized way," said Dr. Nafsiah Mboi, Indonesia's Minister of Health.

The end of the two day forum saw a number of recommendations in order to forward the dialogue. These include the need for the establishment and further strengthening of effective partnerships, the recommendation for all countries to make TB a notifiable disease and to pass regulation to control over the counter sale of anti-TB drugs, as well as actively engaging the private sector to contribute substantially to support TB programmes.