

## **CRG Assessment Reports released in India**

REACH organised a Consultative Meeting on 14 September in New Delhi, with support from the Stop TB Partnership, to present findings of three assessments on different dimensions of the response to TB - key and priority populations, law and human rights and gender. The three assessment reports on these aspects were released by Dr K S Sachdeva, DDG-TB, Central TB Division.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr. K. Sachdeva said, "The person-centred approach to TB is already in the new National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB elimination. We take cognizance of these dimensions that need to be addressed and welcome these findings."

The three tools that form part of the Communities, Rights and Gender stream of work – Data for Action Framework for Key Populations, Gender and Legal Environment Assessment - developed by the Stop TB Partnership provided the guiding framework for undertaking rapid assessments of the three different dimensions.

The rapid assessment of TB and Gender confirms that TB affects different genders differently, impacting vulnerability to TB, its diagnosis, access to treatment, adherence to treatment, the availability of supportive care and treatment outcomes. The report also highlights issues linked to TB and pregnancy as well as the gendered nature of nutrition in India.

Dr Sundari Mase, WHO and Expert Advisory Group Member, CRG Assessments, said, "Globally, one-third of the people diagnosed with TB are women. Gender and TB is an area where India can take the lead. When women are dying of TB, there is a cascading impact on children, families and society."

The National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB elimination 2017-2025, for the first time, included a separate chapter on Priority Populations, who are primarily vulnerable, underserved or populations at risk of TB infection and illness due to various factors. The report on Key Populations brings together available information on about TB among key populations in India through a rigorous review of literature and interviews with stakeholders. The report summarizes the perspectives of both service providers and key populations and identifies the challenges in ensuring their equitable access to TB services.

"For the vulnerable populations, steps should be tailor made. One size does not fit all. Certain things need to be fixed as per the needs of a community – whether they are miners, slum dwellers or people living with HIV," said Mona Balani, TB survivor and member of Touched By TB.

An in-depth assessment of how TB interacts with the law and with human rights, the Legal Environment Assessment (LEA) report examines how the law may be deployed to foster an enabling environment that reduces vulnerability to TB and alleviates the consequences of TB for people affected by the disease. The LEA report identifies how effective disease control efforts can be undertaken while respecting the rights of people infected and affected by the disease and is intended to prompt reflection and dialogue among policymakers, affected communities, health sector actors and other key stakeholders on law reform and the

appropriate and effective implementation of the law.