

# WORLD TB DAY REPORT 2018



**WANTED!**

**LEADERS**  
for a TB-Free world





## MESSAGE BY MRS. SAIRA AFZAL TARAR Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination

It is indeed my pleasure to be here as we express the strongest of commitment to prevent our people from TB and contribute to the global effort of eliminating the disease.

A great deal has been shared by the eminent speakers here about the challenge TB continues to pose globally and in Pakistan. Let me reiterate in the strongest terms that by the grace of Allah Almighty we are equal to the challenge and there has been significant effort made by the Federal Government with support of the Provincial Governments to stop TB in the last few years.

Today TB Control Program is one of the best performing public health programs in the country. Free TB diagnostic and treatment services are available in more than 1700 public and private sector facilities across Pakistan. In 2016, around 69% of the estimated incident TB cases were notified and put on treatment. More than 90% of the TB patients notified are successfully treated. More than 120 advanced diagnostic facilities and 32 specialized treatment facilities have been established across the country for free of cost early diagnosis and treatment for MDR TB patients. In 2016 alone, 366,000 TB cases were notified and enrolled on treatment.

We have a strong cooperation and partnership with the private sector. Today more than 3500 General Practitioners, 125 NGO health centers, 2,000 Pharmacies, 35 private hospitals and 45 Para-statal hospitals in 88 districts are engaged in TB control. It is noteworthy that private sector is contributing towards 28 percent of total TB case notification in the country. Moreover, we are working closely with Pakistan Pediatric Association to control childhood TB in the country.

Cognizant of the risk of TB-HIV co-infection, 40 Sentinel Sites have been established for screening and early diagnosis of TB-HIV co-infection in geographical areas having documented concentrated HIV epidemics.

I would like to share that for MDR TB Pakistan has treatment success rate of 65 percent which is higher than average global success rate. It was in this context that in 2016 Pakistan was recognized with TB Champion Award.

Major strides have been made in improving access and quality of TB care. However there is more work to be done. Factors such as malnutrition, poor housing and sanitation, compounded by other risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol use and diabetes contribute to the problem.

Ladies and Gentlemen-Pakistan stands with the Global community in the fight against TB and is fully committed to end the TB epidemic by 2030 as envisaged in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, World Health Organization End TB Strategy, Stop TB Partnership Global Plan to End TB. Pakistan is also signatory to the WHO Moscow declaration and agreed to end TB in the sustainable development era.

We are hosting a high level regional conference on TB in May this year and our Health and Population Think Tank with national and international experts is meeting tomorrow in Islamabad to deliberate the way forward in meeting remaining challenges in TB Control.

World TB Day aims to raise the public's awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The heaviest burden is carried by vulnerable groups such as women, children, older people, migrants, refugees, prisoners, ethnic minorities, miners and people working and living in risk-prone settings.

The current situation warrants an urgent action by gearing up the efforts to find missing TB cases. We are advocating strongly for enhancing domestic investment in TB. I have taken up the matter with the Prime Minister and the Provincial leaderships. We must expand public private partnerships and adopt multi-sectoral approach involving Education, agriculture, housing, social welfare, and others. The role of the Media for awareness, addressing stigma, information about available free services is critical.

The world community will be meeting in UN general Assembly in September 2018 and a special meeting on TB has been scheduled to address this formidable challenge at to achieve SDG goals.

TB will be controlled when we all make joint efforts in line with the theme of World TB Day "Wanted: leaders for a TB-free world".



## MESSAGE BY DR. NASIR MEHMOOD National Programme Manager, National TB Control Programme

World TB day, which is celebrated all around the World on 24th of March every year, the day on which Robert Koch discovered the Myco bacterium Tubercullus bacterium. Everyone thought that now this debilitating disease would come under control as the organism has been identified.

Then came the invention of anti TB drugs in 1940 again optimism about control of disease but as we know that this disease is still here and among the top 10 biggest killer of human beings.

World TB Day aims to raise the public's awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

About 10.4 million cases of TB occur each year all around the World 1.8 Million die from the disease. Now the new stain i.e. Resistant TB is the new menace of the present day.

As regards Pakistan we contribute about half a million cases of drug sensitive and 27000 cases of drug resistance every year.

Pakistan shares 62% of the disease burden of Eastern Mediterranean region of WHO  
The disease kills almost 44000 Pakistanis every year and causes considerable economic loss. Pakistan with estimated disease case load of 518,000 new sensitive TB cases annually ranks 5th and with caseload of 27000 drug resistant TB cases ranks 6 among 30 high-burden countries. NTP along with PTP's notify, diagnose and treat about 366,061. Whereas the missing drug sensitive cases remain at about 166,000. Then the missing DR TB cases another challenge In order to meet these challenges we need:

- Improved domestic funding
- Inter sectoral collaboration
- Provincial Coordination
- Implementation of Compulsory legislation

As regards the domestic funding we now have approved PC1's from the provinces and regions which will narrow down the funding gap.

Inter-sectoral Collaboration is important. We cannot defeat the menace of this disease without the collaboration of all the sectors of the society i.e. housing, food, environment, social welfare so on and so forth Provincial Coordination is imperative in the devolved setup.



Our Progress to date is:

- National and provincial strategic plans made for next three years
- Start of new drugs for the DRTB i.e. Bedaquiline and Delamanid
- Introduction of Short term Treatment Regimen for the DRTB (24 months treatment course reduced to 9 months)
- Allowed Medical Officers of 144 districts to diagnose and treat childhood TB (TWG)
- Scale up of Gene-Xpert from 54 to 412
- Introduction of Digital X-rays with CAD4 TB for screening of drug Sensitive TB
- Upgradation of PMDT sites for diagnosis and treatment of DR TB (34)
- Introduction of new sentinel sites for TB-HIV 28 to 40
- Engage Lady Health Workers
- Mandatory notification of TB (three provincial assemblies passed the bill, who so ever diagnose or treat will notify to District Health Authorities)
- Digital M&E & Supervision- DHIS-2
- Research capacity building e.g. SORT IT (Strategic Operational)
- Successful completion of previous grant with burn rate of 98.5%
- Successful approval of NFR for 2018-2020

Private sector

- Engage over 5000 GPs & Specialists
- Engage NGOs, Armed forces, & other public institutions
- Active case finding – X-Ray loaded Mobile vans for TB care
- Mass media campaigns
- Zero TB cities- Urban DOTS (inaugurated by the President of Pakistan and Peshawar inaugurated by the CM KP)

In the end I would like to highlight that:

- To diagnose and treat TB cases we have equipped 1360 BMU
- We have 23 BSL II and BSL III labs (Biosafety)
- TB diagnosis and treatment is free for all

We need to join hands with private partners, all the sections of society, PTP's and regions in order to defeat this menace.



## MESSAGE BY DR. REN MINGHUI WHO Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases

Let me start by expressing my deep appreciation to Her Excellency, the Honourable Federal Minister of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination for hosting this celebration for World TB Day.

2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of WHO, and it happens to be a historic year for the global fight against TB. The upcoming UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on TB in September is generating an unprecedented degree of political momentum and public awareness of TB. As you know, the UN meeting follows a very successful TB ministerial conference in Moscow in November 2017, which resulted in a high-level commitment from more than 100 countries and over 800 partners to accelerate efforts.

TB, HIV, malaria, viral hepatitis and neglected tropical diseases have a significant impact on people's health throughout the life-course, and still cause over 4 million preventable deaths each year. Their impact on societies and economies is devastating. As countries move towards universal health coverage, accelerating efforts to reduce the communicable disease burden is a critical strategy to achieve that goal. Countries with a high disease burden will struggle to achieve UHC without investing significantly more in the fight against communicable diseases.

The theme of this year's World TB Day is leadership. We are raising awareness of the fact that commitment is needed not only at the level of Heads of State, ministers, mayors and parliamentarians, but also at the level of community leaders, civil society advocates, health workers, and people affected with TB and their families. Everyone can be a leader in their own field.

The first is strong partnerships and multi-sectoral engagement. New models of private-public partnership and the active engagement of NGOs would reduce the current fragmentation between the public and private sectors and – as a result – significantly enhance case detection rates and improve treatment outcomes.

The second issue is case finding. Through passive case finding approaches, only about 70% of all cases are identified each year in this country. Case finding needs to be further strengthened, and one solution for the future could be for Pakistan to consider moving towards more active case finding strategies. WHO and partners stand ready to provide technical support to scale up these approaches.

The third issue is the need to increase the integration of HIV and TB services in order to better serve the needs of people with co-infections. As you know, this is a major challenge around the world, and an estimated 40% of all HIV deaths are due to TB.

The fourth issue is access to quality-assured medicines. As the country moves towards local manufacturing of TB medicines, it is important to ensure that local manufacturers meet international safety and efficacy standards and achieve WHO pre-qualification for their products.

The fifth and final issue is sustainable financing for TB. Publicly financed health care is an important way to mitigate the economic and social impacts of TB. Studies have consistently shown that TB interventions are highly cost-effective and TB is one of the "best buys" in public health. Increasing domestic financing for TB should be

considered as a core strategy in the national TB response and an essential element of achieving universal health coverage as the country graduates from Global Fund funding.

WHO is working with the Stop TB Partnership to create an immediate push to translate existing TB commitments into action and find the 4 million missing TB cases by 2023.

On this World TB Day, national monuments were lit up around the world – for a third year in a row – to express solidarity and raise awareness around TB. More and more people hear about the human suffering and devastation this disease leaves in its path. On this occasion, we remember those who have lost their lives and those who are struggling with the disease today. We also celebrate the potential of changing the future. The potential of how much we can achieve within a generation.

The challenge is clear: without decisive action on TB, we will not be able to prevent unnecessary deaths, lift people out of poverty, and make progress towards universal health coverage. We all must work together to expand efforts to reach the most vulnerable populations and make sure that “leaving no-one behind” does not remain an empty slogan.

The UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on TB provides us with a unique opportunity to secure the highest-level commitment to end TB – commitment by heads of state and government – and to hear the views of civil society and patient advocates.

Finally, I would like to convey greetings and best regards from the WHO Director-General Dr Tedros, and assure you of WHO’s firm and continuing commitment to help Pakistan on its journey to end TB. This is an enemy we can defeat and ultimately, our success will depend on the strength of our partnerships. Let’s work together for a TB-free world.



## MESSAGE BY DR. JACOB CRESWELL Team Leader of Stop TB Partnership

Dr. Jacob Creswell, the team leader innovations and grants, Stop TB Partnership thanked the Government of Pakistan and Stop TB Partnership Pakistan and emphasized upon the enhanced engagement of civil society organizations to End TB. He particularly referred to the government's effort and the strong advocacy of STP with the provinces to commit domestic funding. He said we need to increase awareness and active participation of local communities in the fight against TB – Build capabilities of members of local communities, empowering individuals to express their rights and assume their responsibilities. He also said that bringing together different organizations and grant holders to exchange best practices in mobilizing communities and managing projects will be very beneficial. Civil society organizations should join existing or promote national partnerships where they do not exist. He stated that partnering initiatives to stop TB at country level we need

- A Platform for all partners interested and working for TB prevention, care, control
- Different sectors: state (NTP) and non-state (civil society organizations and private/business sector)
- Mapping of partners and responsibilities
- A Shared plan based on national TB plan according to competences and comparative advantages of each partner
- Resource mobilization plan jointly developed (including in-kind resources, local donors, external donors)

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - JOINT COMMEMORATION

The theme of World TB Day is Wanted: Leaders for a TB-Free World  
You can make history. End TB

Each year, on 24 March, the world marks World TB Day. TB remains the world's leading infectious killer, being responsible for the deaths of nearly 1.7 million people each year and representing the ninth leading cause of death globally. The day is an occasion to mobilize political and social commitment for further progress towards eliminating TB as a public health burden. We all strongly believe that no one should be left behind in the fight against TB if we want to move towards a ZERO TB deaths world.

A TB Leader is a head of state, minister, mayor, governor, parliamentarian and community leader. A TB Leader is also every person affected by or active in TB and willing and daring to speak up and engage to end TB through their work and personal engagement.

The agreed theme is critical for 2018 in light of the planned UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on TB. The upcoming United Nation General Assembly (UNGA) meeting will follow a very successful Ministerial Conference on Ending TB held in Moscow on 16-17 November 2017 which resulted in high-level commitments to accelerate the End TB goal.

This year's campaign focuses on building commitment to end TB, not only at the political level with Heads of State and Ministers of Health, but at all levels from Mayors, Governors, parliamentarians and community leaders, to people affected with TB, civil society advocates, health workers, doctors or nurses, NGOs and other partners.

The universal and inalienable right to health provides everyone with the right to realize the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination or stigma. Only by placing human rights at the center of global health can we ensure that health care is accessible, acceptable, available and of good quality for everyone, leaving no one behind. To commemorate World TB Day 2018, this year, NTP in collaboration with WHO undertook series of activities at federal level.



## OBJECTIVES OF WORLD TB DAY JOINT COMMEMORATION

1. To hold series of awareness raising sessions starting from 20th March on TB epidemic, and ending TB by 2030 among policymakers, academia, SOS Village and media.
2. To enhance and increase partnerships between governments, the private sector, civil society, sectoral groups, faith-based organizations, media (electronic and print) in an effort to spread the message.
3. To commemorate World TB Day by arranging Seminar and TB Awareness Walk and culmination event on April 10th by arranging football match for mass awareness on TB.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD TB DAY 2018:

### SIGNING OF TB DECLARATION



Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar, Honorable Federal Minister, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination already signed the declaration during the WHO Global Ministerial Conference held in Moscow in November, 2017. During the World TB Day Seminar on March 26, 2018 Dr. Assad Hafeez, Director General Health services, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and all the four Provincial Program Managers for TB Control Program (on behalf of Provincial Government) signed the declaration. The event was attended by United Nations agencies, government representatives, people living with TB, key populations and media. The declaration states the following:

**We commit ourselves to ending TB, which is a political priority defined in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals and as a contribution to achieving universal health coverage, within national legislative and policy frameworks, and to implement the actions through approaches protecting and promoting equity, ethics, gender equality, and human rights in addressing TB, and based on sound, evidence-based, public health principles. We urge WHO, STOP TB Partnership and call upon other UN organizations and all partners, to provide the necessary support for success.**

**We commit to:**

- a) **ADVANCING THE TB RESPONSE WITHIN THE SDG AGENDA**
- b) **ENSURING SUFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCING**
- c) **PURSUIING SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**
- d) **DEVELOPING A MULTISECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK**

**We conclude with our commitment to act immediately on First WHO Global Ministerial Conference Declaration held in Moscow 2017 in coordination with the National TB Control Program (NTP), WHO, partners, and to engage with leaders and all relevant sectors of Government, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral funding agencies and donors, academia, research organizations, scientific community, civil society and the private sector to prepare for and follow-up on the UNGA High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis in 2018 in New York.**

## SERIES OF WORLD TB DAY 2018 EVENT

### I- ACADEMIA:

#### TB Awareness Sessions held at Fazaia Medical College and COMSATS University



Two Awareness Sessions were held in a series of events being organized in connection with World TB Day. Around **150 students** in **Fazaia Medical College** and **75 students** in **COMSATS University** attended the awareness session. A vibrant and rich discussion was held on TB modes of transmission, prevention and testing and students & faculty participated in the question-answer session. Students of 2nd year of Fazaia Medical College also presented a role play on TB which was very informative.

The objectives of the sessions were to talk about TB and most importantly to address the stigma attached to persons having/living with TB. It also provided evidence-based information to students, clearing the misconceptions and myths associated with factors such as how the virus can be contracted and prevented, and how it can be treated. TB young volunteers were also identified among the students and got registered with NTP.

### II- TB AWARENESS SESSION AT SOS VILLAGE

Awareness raising session was organized at the SOS Village to address TB stigma and discrimination. More than 60 children attended the session. The aim of the session was to increase awareness regarding TB and also to promote best practices among the general public to avoid emergence spread of disease. During the seminar Dr. Razia and Dr. Fakhra senior officers from National TB Control Program, highlighted the current situation of TB in Pakistan. They also said that TB is a major public health threat. They shared awareness regarding TB control and its prevention practices.



### III- PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA



Print and electronic media was engaged in World TB Day Campaign. All the major TV & Radio Channels broadcasted the talk shows/ interviews on TB to create awareness. It was said that World TB Day is a reminder to policymakers, health professionals and the public that advancements in TB prevention testing and treatment have enabled communities to lead healthy lives. The wide gap between accessing TB treatment, as well as preventive and support services, calls for increased resource mobilization, focus on addressing the myths and fighting stigma and discrimination associated with TB.



## IV- TB AWARENESS WALK

World TB Day aims to raise public's awareness about TB and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The aim of the walk was to increase awareness regarding TB and also to promote best practices among the general public to avoid spread of disease. TB awareness raising walk was organized where more than 200 people joined the noble cause of raising awareness.

ITP (Islamabad Traffic Police) were also engaged in TB awareness walk. They provided their float which was branded with TB messages. During the walk Dr. Muhammad Assai Ardakani (WHO Representative) and Brig. Dr. Aamer Ikram, National Coordinator highlighted the current situation of TB in Pakistan. They also said that TB is a major public health threat. They shared awareness regarding TB control and its prevention practices.



## V- CITY BRANDING

All major areas of the Federal capital city were branded with streamers and banners comprising of TB messages. The diverse streamers all around the city broadened the voice of National TB Control Program "Wanted: Leaders for TB free Pakistan". You can Make history End TB!

Following are some snaps of city branding:



## VI- TB MESSAGES ON HIGH RISE BUILDINGS WITH LASER LIGHTS

Awareness message regarding TB were displayed on high rise prominent buildings through LED technology. Some of the key TB messages (End TB, Cure TB, Stop TB, Treat TB, Treatment of TB is Free) were displayed at Safa Mall and Jinnah Super F-7, Islamabad.



## VII- FREE TB MESSAGES ON ALL CELLULAR COMPANIES NETWORKS

Public health text messages have the potential to reach large populations and shows high levels of engagement among users.

SMS messages regarding TB were sent to general public through all national Telecommunication network (Ufone/Mobilink/Telenor) with the support of PTA.

### Messages in English

- TB diagnosis and treatment is available free of cost across the country in public and private sector healthcare facilities.
- Any person having persistent cough for more than 2 weeks must go for sputum examination from a nearby diagnostic center for TB.

### Messages in Urdu

- ٹی بی کی تشخیص اور علاج کی سہولت ملک بھر کے نجی اور سرکاری ہسپتالوں میں مفت حاصل کریں۔ دو ہفتوں سے زائد کھانسی کی صورت میں قریبی ٹی بی کے مرکز میں مفت معائنہ کروائیں۔
- ٹی بی قابل علاج مرض ہے۔ چھ ماہ کا علاج، ٹی بی سے نجات

## VIII- SEMINAR

### To Commemorate World TB DAY 2018

The main event of World TB Day was observed on 26th March, 2018 at Marriott Hotel, Islamabad where more than 200 people attended the event. The government of Pakistan pledged to increase awareness about TB, how to prevent it and to set aside prejudices that come with this disease. Each year, this fatal disease claims lives of a large number of people globally. Pakistan also faces a challenge in combating this disease. Remarks were given by Honorable Federal Minister, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and she assured her full determination by the Government, health practitioners NGOs and the people to prevent TB infections and ensure access to safe, effective, and affordable quality medicines and diagnostics and related health commodities as well as healthcare services for all people. Speeches were also given by Additional Director General WHO, NTP Programme Manager, Team leader Stop TB Partnership and WHO Country Representative. It was stressed that effectively combating TB requires that everyone should have equal access to information about preventive measures and the available treatment programs. It calls for concerted efforts involving the parents, teachers, religious scholars, media and indeed every segment of the society to work together and thereby save millions from the consequences of this disease. After the speeches of guest speakers declaration on TB was signed by all four Provincial Managers (on behalf of Provincial Governments). Vote of thanks was given to conclude the seminar.





## IX- CULMINATION EVENT

### Football Match



The National TB Control Program in collaboration with Leisure League's organized a football match on April 10, 2018 at Total Football Ground to commemorate World TB day under the theme "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world"- focusing on building commitment to end TB, not only at the political level, but at all levels.

It is not enough to treat TB as a medical problem- it must be viewed as a social and public health problem that affects us all. As part of broader health initiatives, linking sports with TB awareness would lead to positive outcome as physical activity leads to a better quality of life and also ensures speedy recovery of people with TB.

The main objectives of the football match were to: Create awareness among general public regarding TB, promote a healthy lifestyle through sports reducing the chances of diseases including TB, signing MoU with Leisure Leagues to work together in future, inviting students from nearby colleges/universities to create young volunteers and TB advocates.

The Chief Guest Dr. BaseerAchakzai DNC AIDS & Malaria Control Program said 'World TB Day aims to raise the public's awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic'. He said that this kind of initiative ensures that general public is made aware about TB and we need to join hands with partners like Leisure Leagues, school/colleges, private sector etc. in order to defeat this menace.

The match started with players from different background like media, diplomats, former vice-captain Pakistan Football Team, anchors etc. The match was very interesting and it kept all the audience on their toes. TB messages were time by time given through speakers, and TB song along with other national songs was played in the background. The winning team was given medals by the Chief Guest. The match concluded by both the partners NTP and Leisure Leagues thanking all people for coming and for becoming a part of this fight against TB.

### NOTE OF THANKS

Sincere thanks to the technical committee including representatives from National TB Control Programme, WHO and NIH without whom support, hard work and tireless efforts from planning till execution would have never been possible to undertake series of activities with a wide range of stakeholders.

Thanks to Honorable Federal Minister and Director General Health, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination who assured their full support once the implementation plan was shared with them and signed TB Declaration, followed by the signing of Provincial Health Secretaries.

Without kind leadership and ownership of Dr. AamirIkram, these events would have never been possible. Thanks to NTP team who played a pivotal role in coordination and cooperation.

Sincere thanks to WHO Representative Dr. Assai Ardakani and his team. Both NTP and WHO set an example of a wonderful partnership to deliver as one.





## PRESS CLIPPINGS OF TB AWARENESS WALK



حکومت چپ دق کے مکمل خاتمے کے لیے کوشاں ہے، پروفیسر عامر اکرام اسلام آباد (نامہ خصوصی) کئی بی کے عالمی دن کی مناسبت سے قومی ادارہ صحت میں خصوصی آگنی داک کا اجتماع کیا گیا تو بی کے کی کنٹرول پروگرام سے بی کے کی آگنی داک کے لیے شخص کو ڈی نیر این آئی ایچ اسلام آباد پروفیسر ڈاکٹر عامر اکرام کی زیر قیادت داک مشق کر دی گئی اس موقع پر ڈاکٹر پروفیسر عامر اکرام نے کہا کہ حکومت ملک سے چپ دق کے مکمل خاتمے کے لیے عظیم جدوجہدیں کر رہی ہے (بقیہ صفحہ 14 بجریہ 30)

عامر اکرام 30  
کری ہے اور ملک بھر میں بی کے کی 35 لاکھ سے زائد مریضوں کو سہولیات فراہم کر رہی ہے اس وقت تقریباً چار ہزار کے قریب ڈاکٹر مفت تشخیص اور علاج معالجے کی سہولیات بھجوا رہے ہیں۔ بی کے کے علاج کے لیے ملک بھر میں 1350 مراکز ہیں جہاں بی کے کی مریضوں کے لیے مفت علاج اور تشخیص کی سہولیات موجود ہیں۔ جبکہ حراستی بی کے کے علاج کے لیے ملک بھر میں 34 خصوصی مراکز قائم کئے گئے ہیں، بی کے کی روک تھام کے لیے نئی شے کے متراکب کو کھینچا گیا ہے۔

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) along with the National Tuberculosis Control Programme (NTCP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and organized a TB Awareness Walk at NIH, Islamabad, on Tuesday.

The theme of the event was "Leaders for a TB-Free Pakistan".

The theme focused on the role of leaders in building communities and creating awareness about TB and its prevention. From community leaders, to people affected with TB, civil society advocates, health workers, doctors or nurses, non-governmental organisations and other partners, all can be leaders of efforts to end TB in their own area of work. The aim of the event was to create awareness about TB and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

On this occasion, Commission Manager Dr. Asim Khan said that TB was a serious public health concern and drug resistance was a major challenge. He also said that early diagnosis and treatment was the most effective way to prevent the disease. He said that the government was providing free of cost diagnostic and treatment facilities.

He emphasized that awareness programmes can minimize the risk of disease and stigma in the society. All the partners including WHO, NTCP, NIH, and the Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan, were participating in the event. The event was organized by the National Tuberculosis Control Programme, Expanded Programme on Immunisation and Health Services Academy participated in this activity.

Beside this activity, the NIH also issued an advisory to control and prevent TB. The main objective of the advisory was to standardize TB control efforts and find the missing TB cases which are the transmission source of the disease in the community and to improve the level of preparedness for control and prevention of TB at all levels.

Under the advisory, TB is an airborne infection. Most common symptoms of TB are cough for more than two weeks, low grade fever, night sweats, loss of appetite, weight loss, and blood in sputum. People with TB can infect 10-15 others through close contact over the course of a year.

People with active TB can infect 10-15 others through close contact over the course of a year. Once infected, the risk of developing the disease is high in children less than 5 years of age, adolescents, elderly, malnourished, the immune-compromised, people having HIV, diabetes, and also in smokers. If left untreated, TB can be fatal.

The advisory also highlighted that globally, 10.4 million people became infected with TB while in Pakistan, 518,000 developed the disease and only 69 percent of these were notified and put on treatment in 2016. The NIH has through the advisory, the NIH has urged the federal, provincial and district governments and other stakeholders for the control of TB.

**Staff Report**

**Common Management Unit National Coordinator says drug resistance of TB cases is on the rise in Pakistan**

**Wanted — Leaders for a TB-Free Pakistan**

**TB Awareness Walk organised at National Institute of Health**

**ISLAMABAD**  
Daily Times  
Your Right to Know





# DAWN

## 'Over 500,000 new TB cases reported in Pakistan every year'

ISLAMABAD: Over 500,000 new cases of tuberculosis are reported in Pakistan of which 160,000 do not get treated.

"International health institutions have become very serious about TB and have been pushing the world community to eradicate the disease. We want to reduce the number of cases in Pakistan by 90pc by 2025," said head of the National Institute of Health (NIH) Brig Dr Aamer Ikram.

Talking to *Dawn* on Thursday, ahead of World TB Day on March 24, Dr Ikram said Pakistan has the fifth largest number of reported TB cases in a year.

"That is why I have been nominated the national coordinator of the Aids, TB and Malaria Common Unit so that these diseases are focused on. The world has almost eradicated polio and now, the next goal is to eradicate TB. Pakistan will do its best to eradicate the disease," he said.

"We have procured 450 advanced machines for diagnosing the TB virus from DNA, of which 150 have been

installed and the remaining will be installed soon. Staff is also being trained and over 1,700 units have been established across the country to provide treatment to patients," he added.

Dr Ikram said TB can be completely cured in six months but most patients stop taking medicines after just a few months.

"The virus reactivates and the patient becomes multiple drug resistant (MDR). We have been trying our best and involved the private sector to treat patients. We have a success rate of 93pc for a common TB patient and 60pc for MDR patients," he said.

MDR TB patients cannot be treated with the routine medicine because the virus becomes immune and remains immune if it transfers to another person. So, not only the cost of treatment is increased but the treatment period is also increased to two years.

Meanwhile, a TB awareness walk was held outside the National Institute of Health in which a large number of government officials, health officials and representatives of voluntary

organisations took part.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Ikram said World TB Day is observed each year to raise public awareness about TB and increase efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

A World Health Organisation representative said TB is a major public health threat and that the majority of reported cases are in the age groups of between 15 and 45 years and 12pc of the cases reported are children.

TB is an air-borne infection and the most common symptoms are cough for more than two weeks, low grade fever, loss of appetite or weight loss. These non-specific symptoms can lead to delays in seeking care and the transmission of the bacteria in the community.

People with active TB can infect 10-15 other people through close contact over the course of a year. Once infected, the risk of developing the disease is high in children, the elderly, malnourished, immune-compromised, people with HIV, diabetes and renal failure, and also in smokers. — A Reporter

## PRESS CLIPPINGS OF SEMINAR

















