



Message from the Chair and the Secretariat of the TB/HIV Working Group, May 2011

Dear members of the TB/HIV Working Group and friends of TB/HIV,

Over the past six months we have seen some impressive new developments with new policy guidelines for intensive case-finding and isoniazid preventive therapy released and the endorsement by WHO of a diagnostic tool that could double the number of people living with HIV diagnosed with TB in high burden areas without any significant difference in performance among HIV positives and negatives. The Secretariat of the Working Group, based in the Stop TB Department of WHO, has continued to promote exchange of data and experiences, and high quality scientific debate on TB/HIV research issues as demonstrated more visibly at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections with the annual pre-meeting held in collaboration with the Consortium to Respond Effectively to the AIDS/TB Epidemic. The exemplary collaboration and work of the Stop TB and HIV/AIDS Departments of WHO that has resulted in encouraging scale-up of collaborative TB/HIV activities was recently recognised by the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS in its latest meeting held on 1st - 3rd February 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. Regional support has been provided to Southern African countries with a workshop held in December 2010 for Civil Society organisations to promote greater community engagement and demand generation for services, and a workshop organised with the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in March 2011 for National TB and AIDS programme managers, monitoring and evaluation focal points and key country based PEPFAR implementers to accelerate the implementation of the Three I's for HIV/TB and earlier initiation of ART according to the WHO guidelines. Details on these can be found on our website at the following link: http://www.stoptb.org/wg/tb_hiv/default.asp

Below we would like to provide you with a brief update on the more recent TB/HIV activities carried out by the Secretariat and the Working Group, planned activities for the next couple of months and recent changes in Core Group membership.

1. Revision of the TB/HIV Policy

The WHO Interim Policy on Collaborative TB/HIV Activities is currently being updated to reflect the latest evidence and best practice in the implementation of collaborative TB/HIV activities, and guidelines more recently published by the Stop TB Department and the Department of HIV/AIDS of WHO, through the involvement of many of the members of the TB/HIV Working Group. The Interim Policy on Collaborative TB/HIV activities was released in 2004, in response to demand from countries for immediate guidance on action to decrease the dual burden of tuberculosis and HIV. The policy has provided clear and comprehensive guidance for policy-makers, TB and HIV programme managers, donors, development agencies and non-governmental organizations on how to address the HIV related TB burden and has been one of the more popular WHO Stop TB and HIV/AIDS Departments' policies, with more than 170 countries reporting the adoption of its components by the end of 2010.

2. 20th Coordinating Board Meeting of the Stop TB Partnership, Washington DC, 31st March – 1st April 2011

Special Guest, Ambassador Eric Goosby, US Global AIDS Coordinator of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief led the TB/HIV session at the 20th

Coordinating Board Meeting, followed by an update on the work of the TB/HIV working group by Dr Diane Havlir. The Board agreed to move forward with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Stop TB Partnership and UNAIDS for the period 2012-2013, once impact of the MoU for the period 2010-2011 is reported upon. In addition, the Board expressed support for the Working Group's activities focused on regional responses and underlined the importance of finding additional funding for this.

3. 22nd Annual International Harm Reduction Conference, 3rd – 7th April 2011

The International Harm Reduction Association conducted its 22nd Annual International Conference, *Harm Reduction 2011* on 3rd - 7th April in Beirut, Lebanon at which Haileyesus Getahun delivered a plenary presentation "*Tuberculosis among injecting drug users: urgent action needed to address the neglect*" on 5th April 2011. The presentation highlighted the intertwined linkage of drug use, TB and incarceration and called upon a multisectoral and region specific response, including generation of more data to inform the scale-up of evidence-based interventions with due attention to basic human rights. The presentation can be found at this [link](#).

4. Changes in the membership of the TB/HIV Core Group

There have been a number of changes in Core Group membership recently. The International AIDS Society, National Institutes of Health and Family Health International, permanent institutional members of the Core Group have replaced their representatives. The seat of the Revised National TB control Programme of India has now shifted to the National AIDS Control Organisation of India. The Global Laboratory Initiative has also assigned a liaison to the Core Group. The following are the new members:

Carol Dukes Hamilton MD, MHS, FACP, FIDSA, Senior Scientist at FHI and Professor of Medicine at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina will represent FHI. Her career has primarily focused on TB and TB/HIV research for public health policy and program implementation in both the US and in resource limited settings.

Bertrand Audion is the new Executive Director of IAS who was formerly Executive Director of the French-based NGO Sidaction where, from 2000-2011 he managed the implementation of HIV prevention and care programmes in France.

Richard Hafner, MD, Senior Scientist at the Division of AIDS at NIAID has joined the Core Group representing NIH.

B.B.Rewari, MD, FRCP represents the National AIDS Control Organisation of India. He currently serves as the National Programme Officer for ART, mentoring and monitoring nearly 300 ART service delivery facilities across India, coordinating the HIV/TB collaborative activities at these sites.

John Nkengasong, PhD will serve as the liaison officer of the Global Laboratory Initiative. He has been Chief of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's International Laboratory Branch at the Division of Global HIV/AIDS since 2005. He also co-chairs the Laboratory Technical Working Group of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. He will be backed by Heather Alexander, PhD who is the TB and Opportunistic Infections Unit Lead at the International Laboratory Branch of the Division of Global HIV/AIDS.

We wish farewell to and thank Dr Lakhbir Singh Chauhan who has made a tremendous contribution to the progress of TB/HIV collaborative activities in India. As co-chair of the National Technical Working Group for TB/HIV, Dr Chauhan led the development of a joint national framework for TB/HIV collaborative activities in association with NACO. Thanks,

largely to his leadership, in the nineteen states that are implementing the intensified TB/HIV package, more than 60% of registered TB patients knew their HIV status with approximately 90% of HIV-infected TB patients put on CPT and 50% on ART. The TB/HIV Working Group and the global TB/HIV response has benefitted immensely from the involvement of Dr Chauhan in its activities since 2004.

5. Upcoming Events

HIV/TB research frontiers meeting in conjunction with the 6th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2011), 17th July 2011, Rome, Italy

The Stop TB Department of WHO, which serves as the Secretariat of the Working Group in collaboration with the Consortium to Respond Effectively to the AIDS/TB Epidemic (CREATE) is organizing a research meeting on HIV/TB research in children and women prior to the IAS conference in Rome, Italy on 17th July 2011. The aim of the meeting is to promote high level scientific exchange of ideas and explore research priorities on the specific issues related to TB and HIV in women and children, and the integration of HIV and TB services into mother and child health programmes. More information about the content, venue and registration will be communicated in due course

Scaling up the implementation of collaborative TB/HIV activities in the Region of the Americas, 7th – 8th July 2011, Panama

As part of the regional approach of the Global TB/HIV Working Group, this two-day meeting aims to share regional and global experiences and best practices for greater political advocacy, resource mobilization and scale-up in the implementation of collaborative TB/HIV activities and integration of TB and HIV services in the Region of the Americas. Proposed participants will include National TB and AIDS Programme managers, prison health system officials, and heads of national AIDS commissions from priority countries, key national and regional AIDS and TB stakeholders and members of the TB/HIV Working Group.

16th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), 4th – 8th December 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The theme of this year's ICASA is "Own, scale-up and sustain". This offers an excellent opportunity for discussing the scaling up of collaborative TB/HIV activities and sharing experiences in Africa. The deadline for abstracts is 10th June and we very much encourage members to submit. For more information please visit the ICASA website at: <http://www.icasa2011addis.org/>

6. Next Core Group Meeting

The next TB/HIV Core Group meeting will be hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Health and will be held in Beijing on 9th – 11th November 2011. This meeting is expected to be attended by high level Chinese officials and will be used as an advocacy opportunity to raise the profile of TB/HIV in the country and the region.

We look forward to another productive year.

Diane Havlir, MD
Chair

Haileyesus Getahun, MD, PhD
Secretariat