



Message from the Chair and the Secretariat of the TB/HIV Working Group of the Stop TB Partnership February 2012

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

We have pleasure in sharing a brief overview of recent activities carried out by members of the Working Group and the Secretariat since our last message on World Aids Day, as well as upcoming events to note in the diary.

1. 16th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 4-8 Dec 2011

Attended by more than 10,000 participants, the 16th ICASA conference held in December provided excellent coverage of TB, including a high profile plenary presentation by the Chair of the TB/HIV Working Group, Dr Diane Havlir who called for the revision of WHO's guidelines on ART to raise the CD4 count to initiation of ART to 550, to reduce the impact of TB and AIDS. Preliminary results from the three-arm randomized study of when to start ART among TB patients from Ethiopia (at 1, 4 and 8 weeks) with mortality as its primary outcome were also reported. The study findings were in line with findings from the CAMELIA, STRIDE AND SAPIT clinical trials and further demonstrated that starting co-treatment as early as 1 week reduces mortality. In addition, a consultation on the development of WHO's policy guidance for the engagement of NGOs for community based and integrated TB and TB/HIV activities was convened on 6th December as part of the conference. For all HIV/TB sessions and presentations featured in the conference programme please see the [ICASA Roadmap](#). For access to all the presentations from ICASA please click on the following [link](#).

2. Workshop to accelerate the implementation of revised guidelines on IMCI/IMAI/IMPAC and the Three I's for HIV/TB, Lome, Togo, 25-27 Jan 2012

WHO, the Secretariat of the TB/HIV Working Group and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a three-day workshop in Lome, Togo to accelerate the nationwide implementation of the collaborative TB/HIV activities in 12 French speaking countries on 25th – 27th January 2012. The workshop was attended by 66 participants, and included representatives from national HIV and TB programmes, monitoring and evaluation focal points and civil society representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Senegal, Rwanda, Guinea and Togo. A core component of the workshop included sharing of experiences and best practices. Impressive progress of Rwanda was noted with 97% coverage of HIV testing among TB patients and 97% and 67% coverage of co-trimoxazole and of ART respectively in HIV positive TB patients reported during the first three quarters of 2011. Coverage of the *Three Is for HIV/TB* is also good with 94% of all newly registered people living with HIV screened for TB, and 3,567 people living with HIV receiving IPT in three pilot sites since August 2011, using the WHO recommended 4 symptom algorithm to rule out active TB. More than 90% of TB clinics offer the full HIV package of care, and infection control measures are reported to be implemented in 65% of these clinics. The workshop concluded with countries updating their current TB/HIV plans in accordance with the latest WHO recommendations and tools, defining actions that need to be strengthened or scaled up including intensifying TB screening among pregnant women living with HIV. For more details on the workshop, including agenda and presentations please visit the following [link](#).

3. 21st Meeting of the Coordinating Board of the Stop TB Partnership, Bangkok, 30 Jan–1 Feb 2012

The 21st Meeting of the Coordinating Board of the Stop TB Partnership was convened in Bangkok, Thailand from 30th January to 1st February, where Richard Chaisson and Haileyesus Getahun kindly represented the TB/HIV Working Group. Impressive news was shared in a presentation from South Africa's health minister, Aaron Motsoaledi, on the joint initiative of the South African Development Community (SADC) countries to implement a regional multi-sectoral response to TB and HIV in the mining sector. Also presented was an update on the implementation of South Africa's bold new National Strategic Plan, including further plans for roll-out and results from Xpert MTB/RIF South Africa. Paul de Lay, Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS also gave a presentation on progress of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNAIDS and the Stop TB Partnership. For the agenda, presentations and decision points of this meeting please visit the following [link](#)

4. Call for global collection of information on use of Xpert MTB/RIF

The WHO Stop TB Department's Diagnostics and Laboratory Strengthening Unit (WHO-TBL) is asking implementers of Xpert MTB/RIF to share their experiences in the ongoing use of this new technology. The information will measure the laboratory workload, the numbers of tests being performed and results, and the main logistical and operational problems being encountered, on a facility basis. A special website has been developed to collect this information online: <https://extranet.who.int/xpertmtbrif> Information collected will be used to inform the development of future guidance by WHO and in the ongoing surveillance of operational problems and corrective measures taken. We encourage TB/HIV implementers to register their Xpert MTB/RIF experiences using the website.

5. Obama Administration fiscal year 2013 budget request released

On 13th February the Obama Administration issued the President's budget request for the fiscal year 2013. Whilst the proposed commitment for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria increases to \$1.65 billion, fulfilling the President's pledge of \$4 billion over three years, PEPFAR will be receiving a cut of more than half a billion. In light of the recent cancellation of Round 11, this represents yet another setback for scaling up collaborative TB/HIV activities as countries strive to define and maintain essential services. Within the overall proposed budget, \$224 million is requested for USAID's tuberculosis programmes, down \$12 million from 2012 expenditure levels; USAID funding for HIV is set to reduce by \$20 million to \$330 million and State funding for HIV could reduce by \$614 million to \$3,629 million. The news on USG investment in research and development also appears pessimistic with the already stretched National Institutes for Health seeing no increase in funding allocation and the CDC Office for TB elimination, which houses the TB Clinical Trial Consortium, seeing a budget slash of \$4.6 million. In the [US Department of State's Official Blog](#), the United States Global AIDS Coordinator was confident, however, that the PEPFAR budget would allow the United States to keep to its commitments and to meet the targets on HIV treatment and prevention announced on World Aids Day, 1st December 2011. For more on this story please visit the following links: [PEPFAR Raided to Meet Global Fund Pledge in President Obama's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget](#), [President Obama's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget: Health Research, R&D, and the CDC Flat or Declining Budgets](#) and [Press Release by Treatment Action Group](#)

6. Upcoming events

19th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, Seattle USA 5–8 March 2012

CROI 2012 will be attended by an expected 4000 leading researchers and clinicians and provides an excellent platform for highlighting TB/HIV research priorities. The conference agenda this year features a symposium on the afternoon of 8 March on Scientific advances on TB pathogenesis and treatment. For further details please visit the CROI 2012 [website](#). In addition, WHO in collaboration with the Consortium to Respond Effectively to the AIDS/TB Epidemic (CREATE) and the TB/HIV Working Group of the Stop TB Partnership is organizing the 6th CROI affiliated HIV/TB research meeting to be held on Monday 5th March 2012, from 11:30-13:30 at the Grand Hyatt Seattle. The meeting will focus specifically on the measurement

and reduction of TB transmission in high HIV burden settings and will explore the critical knowledge and research gaps related to MTB transmission, infection and its associated impact through sharing new data from on-going studies and identifying critical research questions. You can find the agenda at the following [link](#). The meeting is intended for HIV researchers, implementers and public health policy makers. Attendance will be by invitation only and on a first come first serve basis. A light lunch will be served during the meeting. If you are interested in participating please send your interest to tbhiv@who.int at your earliest convenience. For the reports of research meetings from previous years please visit the following [link](#).

AFRAVIH 2012, 6th Francophone Conference on HIV/AIDS, Geneva, Switzerland 25–28 March 2012

This biennial francophone conference on HIV will be hosted in the International Conference Centre of Geneva this year from 25th – 28th March, and should see close to 1,600 attendees. Although deadlines for abstract submissions are now closed, we encourage members and friends of TB/HIV attending to take every opportunity to mainstream TB/HIV into other thematic sessions and debates such as mother and child health or PMTCT. This year a plenary presentation on TB by Francois-Xavier Blanc is to be given on 27th March at 9.30. For the conference programme please visit the following [link](#).

AIDS 2012, XIX International AIDS Conference, Washington DC, USA, 22-27 July 2012

This year's conference theme is "Turning the Tide Together" and is expected to host some 20,000 delegates from 200 countries. The Chair of the Working Group has the privilege of being the co-chair of the Conference. The Working Group Secretariat and Working Group members have been working hard to mainstream TB/HIV activities and sessions into the conference agenda. We anticipate that there will be abstract sessions, skills building workshops and a symposium, focused on HIV/TB at the conference and will keep you posted as we are informed of these developments. Whilst the deadline for abstract submission has already passed below are some other key deadlines:

- Satellite applications close: 31st March 2012
- Late breaker abstract submission open: 19th April – 22nd May 2012
- Affiliated independent events applications close: 20th April 2012

The plenary presenters have now been announced and Anthony Harries of the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease will be presenting on TB and HIV – Science and Implementation to Turn the Tide on TB on Friday 27th July 2012. Previously a Core Group member right from the start in 2002, Professor Harries is well known to the TB/HIV Working Group. He is currently Senior Advisor at the Union and honorary professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He spent 20 years living and working in sub-Saharan Africa, starting in North-east Nigeria in 1983 followed by Malawi in 1986 where he was, amongst other things, National Advisor to the Malawi TB Control Programme and National Advisor in HIV Care and Treatment in the Ministry of Health, responsible for scaling up antiretroviral therapy. In 2008 he returned to UK where he took up his current position as Senior Advisor with the Union. For further details please visit the conference [website](#).

Please note that you can keep up-to-date with TB/HIV news on a more regular basis by monitoring the [TB/HIV Working Group homepage](#), by following us on Twitter [@HIVTB](#) or by liking our [Facebook](#) page. We also encourage members to provide us with news items that you would like to be included in future letters.
Regards,

Diane Havlir, MD
Chair

Haileyesus Getahun, MD, PhD
Secretariat