

Kabul, 25 March 2014 - World TB Day was commemorated across Afghanistan on 25 March 2014. Afghanistan is one of 22 TB high-burden countries in the world. In 2013, a total of 31 622 of the estimated 56 000 TB cases were notified through expanding DOTS coverage within the basic package of health services and essential package of hospital services with a 90% treatment success rate.

Dr Surya Dalil, Minister of Public Health, said that the drug resistant form of TB might become a major challenge and the treatment of such cases expensive. She stressed the importance of vaccination among children and developing a comprehensive package of services for women affected by TB based on a nationwide research.

Dr Rik Papper Korn, WHO Representative in Afghanistan, said, "Of the 9 million people a year who get sick with TB worldwide, a third of them are "missed" by public health systems. Many of these 3 million people live in the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. Afghanistan being in complex emergency situation is one of those In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the case detection rate is only 63% (Global TB report 2013). This means that out of the 670 000 new TB cases estimated to have occurred in 2012, around 250 000 cases were missed." Also he added "We believes that no one should be left behind in the fight against TB. This World TB Day, we call for a global effort to find, treat and cure the three million and accelerate progress towards zero TB deaths, infections, suffering and stigma. To reach the three million and move towards eliminating of TB as a public health problem we will need to aggressively scale up TB programmes, especially for the most vulnerable groups and in hotspots, while investing in research and development for the new tools that we urgently need.

Mr Shorida on behalf Stop TB Partnership in Afghanistan stressed on the need to address the link between TB and poverty and its consequences. He said that we all knew TB is curable but still TB is one of the top three major causes of death among women ages 15–44 worldwide.

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