

“It’s time to detect and treat missed TB cases” as the Government of Japan provides further funding and Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan and WHO renew their commitment to fighting TB in the country

24 March 2020 - Worldwide, TB is one of the top 10 causes of death and the leading cause from a single infectious agent. Millions of people continue to fall sick with TB each year. Globally, 10 million people developed TB diseases, 7 million of them were reported to have been reached with quality TB care and TB caused an estimated 1.5 million death in 2018 (Global Tuberculosis Report 2019).

It is estimated that in 2018, 70 000 people developed TB and in 2019, 52 770 (75%) TB cases were detected and enrolled for treatment. An estimated 2500 drug-resistant TB cases emerged in 2018 and last year 396 (16%) drug-resistant TB cases were notified and enrolled for treatment in Afghanistan.

The Government of Japan and WHO Afghanistan have been partners in the National TB Control Programme since the programme was first launched in the country. Both sides committed to the partnership until the elimination of TB in Afghanistan. The Government of Japan and WHO have been providing financial and technical support to the TB control programme for about half of century now.

The Government of Japan and WHO on the occasion of World TB Day 2020 signed exchange notes of partnership to combat tuberculosis for 2020-2023. WHO has already received two grants (US\$ 19 million) since 2015 to provide first- and second-line TB medicines (FLDs and SLDs), diagnostic consumables and equipment, including support for capacity-building on drug management, supervisory visits and rehabilitation/reconstruction of medical stores at central and provincial levels. The new funding by the Government of Japan, provides about US\$ 7 million to avail anti-TB medicines and molecular advanced diagnostic kits for TB diagnosis.

“873 health facilities are providing TB diagnostic and treatment services all over the country. Last year 52 770 susceptible TB cases were notified and enrolled for treatment. The National TB Control Programme maintained a high treatment success rate for several consecutive years, and we applaud their great work,” said Dewa Samad, Deputy Minister of Public Health.

“TB was Japan’s top cause of death in early 20th century. The number of patients has been dramatically decreased; however, TB still remains as the major infectious disease and serious threat to the Japanese people, especially for older people. That shows how difficult it is to eradicate TB from the world and explains that the global partnership is indispensable to tackle this challenge. I truly admire and thank all the people who are implementing this project, said Mr Takashi KAMADA Counsellor at the Embassy of Japan in Afghanistan.

“In spite of remarkable progress, there are many challenges to end TB as a health problem, for example, still 25% drug susceptible TB cases and 84% drug-resistant TB cases remained undiscovered and without treatment. It is estimated that 11 000 people died in 2018 because of tuberculosis, which is not acceptable. This grant will enable the procurement of life-saving drugs that will accelerate our efforts in the fight against tuberculosis in line with National and Global End TB Strategies to achieve targets of UN General Assembly High Level Meeting for TB,” said Dr Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Representative in Afghanistan.

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