

13 May 2012 – A joint national and international high-level in-depth review of the national tuberculosis (TB) control programme of Saudi Arabia, led by Dr Jaouad Mahjour, Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases Control, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, and Dr Mario Raviglione, Director of the Stop TB Department at WHO headquarters, took place from 29 April to 9 May.

Reviewing progress in TB control

The key aim of the review was to assess progress in TB control in the country over the past decade by each component of the Stop TB Strategy and against the TB elimination goal of member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (

Based on the detailed findings of the assessment, strategic guidance and recommendations on the further strengthening of the national TB programme to accelerate reduction of the TB burden towards elimination, both nationwide and beyond, will be developed.

The review mission concluded that TB is one of the national health priorities and that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in implementing the Stop TB Strategy, in line with international recommendations.

Taking a leadership role in TB elimination

High-level political commitment and availability of resources constitute crucial elements in advancing towards the ambitious, but feasible, goal of eliminating TB.

Saudi Arabia is ready to assume a leadership role in pursuing the TB elimination process and becoming a model, both in the Region and worldwide, by initiating a national elimination campaign.

WHO support to the Ministry of Health

WHO has been requested and is ready to provide all necessary technical support in rapidly implementing the recommendations of the mission in order to effectively maintain momentum to eliminate TB.

Additionally, and building on the national elimination campaign, the Minister of Health is in full support of preparing a strategic document, with the technical support and collaboration of WHO, which could potentially serve to foster TB elimination in other countries too.

This process represents a truly historical milestone for reducing the burden and suffering from TB, not only in the Region but the entire world.

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