

Inaugural meeting of the revived national partnership Pakistan held in Islamabad

Islamabad (August 13, 2009). The inaugural meeting of the newly revived coordinating board of Stop TB Partnership Pakistan was held in Islamabad. The meeting coincided with debriefing session on NTP Programme Review by WHO and other international partner organizations. Representatives of Ministry of Health, multilateral/bi-lateral aid and technical agencies, media, chamber of commerce & industry, academia and civil society attended the meeting while a known television artist Mrs. Shehnaz Sheikh also participated.

The inaugural meeting was presided by the newly elected board chair Prof. Masood Hameed Khan who is also Vice Chancellor of country's premier medical university Dow University of Medical Sciences.

Dr. Noor Ahmad Baloch, the NTP manager while speaking on the occasion informed that Dow University had agreed to provide secretarial support to the national partnership while NTP will continue to coordinate technical aspects of overall TB care strategy in the country.

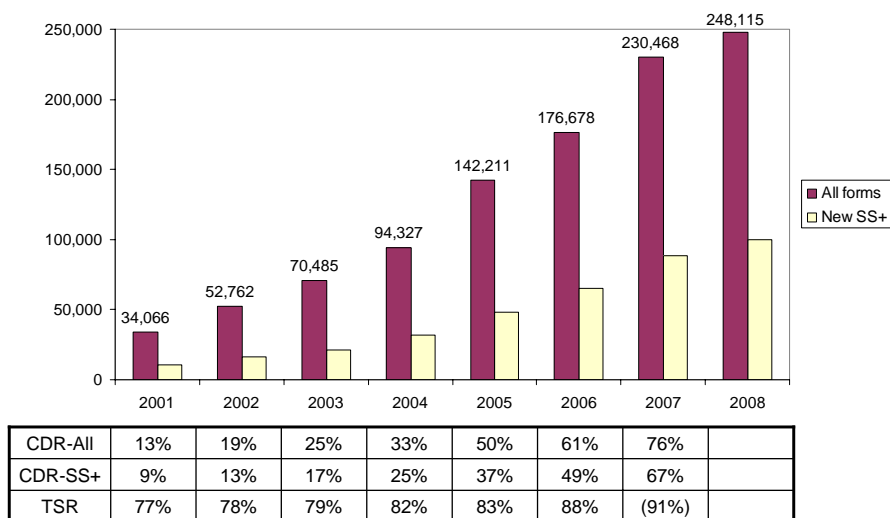
The Chair Dr Hameed while outlining the objectives of partnership said that it will work towards elimination of TB from Pakistan by fostering a national dialogue & action to complement the NTP in implementation of Stop TB Strategy. The chair also stressed the need to make TB a political and development priority in the country.

The meeting was also addressed by Dr. Akihiro Seita from WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and a member of Eastern Mediterranean Partnership board. He briefed the participants on roles and achievements of the Eastern Mediterranean partnership and congratulated the partners in Pakistan for reviving the national partnership.

Mr. Aziz Khan Tank, President of Pakistan Medical Association and Mr Islam Khan from Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry also spoke on the occasion and ensured support for stop TB activities.

Pakistan, shares almost of half of the disease burden in WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. The country has continued to make progress in TB care since 2000. The latest Programme review mission noted that case notifications of TB has continued to increase. In 2008, 248,115 all forms of TB, including 99,670 new SS+ cases, were notified. The treatment success rate of SS+ cases registered in 2007 is reportedly 91%.

No. of notified TB cases, CDR & TSR in Pakistan (2001-2008)



The review mission appreciated the good implementation of its 2008 recommendations, despite the increasing economic and security difficulties in the country. However, the mission also noted that there were several critical recommendations that had not yet been fully implemented, including: support to Green Star like private sector partners; drug management; suspect management; contact management; control of sale of 2nd line TB drugs, and; empowerment of patients.

It is expected that the revived national partnership will help NTP strengthen implementation of TB care services in Pakistan.