The Regional TB Programme (RTB) is working towards a WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region free of tuberculosis (TB) – with zero TB-related deaths, disease and suffering.

The work of RTB, guided by the upcoming Tuberculosis regional action plan for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region 2023–2030, will strengthen implementation of the WHO End TB Strategy in all countries of the Region in order to achieve the stated Strategy targets and milestones of:

- reducing TB deaths by 90% by 2030 compared with 2015;
- reducing TB incidence by 80% by 2030 compared with 2015; and
- ensuring that no TB-affected person or family faces catastrophic costs due to TB.

RTB will ensure the regional context-specific implementation of the End TB Strategy based on the following key principles, pillars and components:

Principles

- Government stewardship and accountability, with monitoring and evaluation.
- Strong coalition with civil society organizations and communities.
- Protection and promotion of human rights, ethics and equity.
- Adaptation of the strategy and targets at country level, with global collaboration.

Pillars and components

Integrated, patient-centred care and prevention

- Early diagnosis of TB including universal drug-susceptibility testing, and systematic screening of contacts and high-risk groups.
- Treatment of all people with TB including drug-resistant TB, and patient support.
- Collaborative TB/HIV activities and management of co-morbidities.
- Preventive treatment of persons at high risk, and vaccination against TB.

Intensified research and innovation

- Discovery, development and rapid uptake of new tools, interventions and strategies.
- Research to optimize implementation and impact, and promote innovations.

Globally, progress towards achieving the 2020 targets and milestones of the End TB Strategy, and in meeting the commitments made in the Political declaration of the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Fight Against Tuberculosis, has been insufficient – and based on current projections will be too slow to reach the goal of TB elimination by 2030, as stipulated in Target 3.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to accelerate progress in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, the following issues must be taken into consideration and addressed:

The heterogeneity of countries in the Region requires the use of tailored approaches.

Greater levels of investment in TB prevention and care are needed to address the resource limitations that are currently undermining efforts to achieve TB-related goals and targets.

Strengthening partnerships and collaboration will be key to ensuring the maximum beneficial impact of TB prevention and care efforts.

The strategic interventions and priority actions required to achieve the targets of the End TB Strategy in the Region are elaborated upon in detail in the upcoming Tuberculosis regional action plan for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region 2023–2030.

Sources

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