

WORLD TB DAY 2011



Sindh TB Control Program

For A Better World

Nat'l TB Control Program

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

'On The Move Against Tuberculosis'

Mon 28th Mar 2011, DHA Creek Club, Karachi, Pakistan

A Brief of the Conference Proceedings

Defence Authority Creek Club, Karachi was the venue of the World TB Day 2011, **National Conference 'On The Move Against Tuberculosis'**, on Mon 28th March 2011. The conference was organized and convened by Foundation for 'Progress', hosted by National TB Control Program, M/o Health, Govt. of Pakistan, in collaboration with the Sindh TB Control Program, Pakistan Anti-TB Association and the WHO.

The **National Conference 'On The Move Against Tuberculosis'** was held under the 'Progress' program of 'Building Partnerships, Promoting Sustainability', the objective of which is to encourage and foster cooperation and build bridges between the government, the private sector and the civic society, all of which are critical to the successful implementation of our national plans and policies.

Participation: The conference was a major event on the occasion of the World TB Day 2011 commemorations in Pakistan. It was participated by about 175 delegates, at the policy and decision making levels, representing 51 organizations from the public, private sector, civic society, parliamentarians, academia, pharmaceuticals, doctors, researchers, nurses, WHO and other national and international organizations. Messages of appreciation and commendation were specially conveyed to the conference by the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Governor of Sindh and other dignitaries.

Objectives: The conference highlighted the importance of tuberculosis and the urgent need to improve and further strengthen the preventive and control measures for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals and objectives of reducing the incidence of TB by 50% by 2015. It also reviewed the current TB situation in the country and recommended practical and workable solutions to the various obstacles in the treatment, prevention and control activities. In addition, the conference provided a forum for interaction, sharing of experiences, good practices, proposition of new ideas and innovative techniques in the management of tuberculosis. The conference also sought to educate, update and raise awareness, encouraging patient and community participation.

Structure: The proceedings of the **National Conference 'On The Move Against Tuberculosis'** started with the recitation from the Holy Quran, a brief introduction on the Foundation for 'Progress' and an overview of the conference. The conference comprised of inaugural, plenary and the concluding session. The inaugural session was dominated by a Welcome and Convener's speech by Dr. M.A Wajid, Chairman & President, Foundation for 'Progress' and an inaugural address by Dr. Sikandar Ali Mandhro, MPA and former Health Minister, Govt. of Sindh. The plenary session was comprised of eight general presentations by eminent experts on the subject matter and four provincial presentations by respective provincial representatives and a one hour question and answers session. The concluding session comprised of the vote of thanks and the closing address.

Facilitators: The conference was facilitated by Dr. M.A Wajid, Chairman 'Progress' and Dr. Ahmed Ali Shah, MPA Sindh Assembly.

Tea: Refreshing, hot tea and cookies were served to the guests and the delegates during a fifteen minutes interval following the inaugural session.

Lunch: A 30 minutes lunch break was observed wherein the delegates were feted with light and refreshing snacks.

Gift Kit for the Delegates: The Foundation for ‘Progress’ provided all the guests and delegates with a beautiful conference folder which included a writing pad, conference overview, list of speakers and the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan’s message on the occasion. A special gift package consisting of a beautiful paper slip holder, ball point pen and a keychain were presented to all the guests and the delegates on behalf of the Glaxo Smithkline Pakistan Ltd. The National TB Control Program also provided a number of publications on: National Guidelines for TB Management, A Refresher Module for Doctors and on the Pakistan’s Current TB Status. While the Sindh TB Control Program provided all the participants with beautiful white color caps bearing Stop TB Slogans.

Presentation & Speakers: A total of twelve presentations including four provincial presentations with a one hour question and answer session were the hallmark of the one day conference. The following are the topics of the presentations and the names of their respective speakers:-

1. Keynote Presentation: ‘Tuberculosis in the 21st Century’
Dr. M.A Wajid, Chairman & President ‘Progress’
2. ‘Health Systems Opportunities & Challenges in Communicable Diseases Cntrl’
Dr. Nisar Ahmed Solangi, Nat’l Program Officer WHO Health Systems
3. ‘An Overview on HIV / TB Co-infection’
Dr. Ashraf Memon, Snr. Pathologist, Civil Hospital
4. ‘Common Pitfalls in the Diagnosis and Management of TB in Pakistan’
Dr. Javed. A. Khan, Professor of Medicine, AKU
5. ‘MDR TB and XDR TB – Present & Future Issues’
Dr Shahina Qayyum, OJHA Dow University of Health Sciences
6. ‘Role of Primary default in Control of Tuberculosis’
Dr. Nisar Rao, Associate Professor, OJHA Institute of Chest Diseases
7. ‘On the Move Against Tuberculosis – The Nursing Perspective’
Ms. Khairunissa Hooda, Snr. Nurse, Aga Khan University Hospital
8. ‘Genetics in Tuberculosis’
Dr. Unaiza Hadi, Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, National TB Control Program
9. Sindh TB Perspective
Dr. Amanullah Ansari, Sindh TB Control Program
10. Balochistan TB Perspective
Dr. Maqbool Ahmed, Manager TB Control Program, Balocistan
11. Khyber Pakhtunkhawa TB Perspective
Dr. Abdul Latif, D.G Health, Khyber Pakhtunkhawa
12. Gilgit Baltistan TB Perspective
Dr. Ahmed Mobeen, Focal Person, Provincial TB Program, Govt. of Gilgit Baltistan

Message to the National Conference from H.E Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of Pakistan

I wish to congratulate Foundation for ‘Progress’ on organizing National Conference ‘On The Move Against Tuberculosis’. I also commend the collaboration of WHO, National Tuberculosis Control Program, Sindh TB Control Program and the Pakistan Anti-TB Association for arranging this conference.

It is a matter of deep concern that despite being a curable disease TB is still widely prevalent in Pakistan. Sustained and concerted efforts need to be made for seeking new and innovative ways to prevent the spread of the disease and to achieve the UN Millennium target of reducing tuberculosis to 50% by 2015. Our doctors and experts need to do more, do it urgently, and do it better to combat the disease.

Greater efforts need to be made both at the global and national level to make quality care accessible to all without barriers of gender, age, and the ability to pay. We need new commitments and new vigor to turn those commitments into action.

Seminars and conferences like this play an important role in enabling the participants to abreast themselves with latest advances in combating the disease. They afford an opportunity to throw up new ideas and highlight best practices and new techniques to fight and eradicate tuberculosis.

There is a need for collaborative effort. It calls for partnership and collaboration between governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, civil societies and all other stakeholders to join hands in the fight against tuberculosis. I am confident that with our renewed commitment and collective efforts, TB will cease to be a major public health problem.

I once again congratulate Foundation for 'Progress' on holding this national conference. I welcome the participants to the Conference and hope they have stimulating academic discussions. I wish national Conference on tuberculosis and the organizers all success.

May Allah Almighty be with you in you noble efforts, Ameen.

Message to the National Conference from H.E Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Prime Minister of Pakistan

It is, indeed, heartening to know that 'Foundation for Progress' is organizing a National Conference 'On the Move Against Tuberculosis' in commemoration of the World TB Day, 28th March, 2011 – in collaboration with World Health Organization, National Tuberculosis Control Program, Sindh TB Control Program and the Pakistan Anti-TB Association. The conference aims at focusing the need to move forward with scaled up efforts and continue to seek new and innovative ways to stop TB, in order to achieve the UN Millennium target of bringing the burden of the disease down to 50 per cent, by the year 2015.

Unfortunately, despite being a potentially curable disease, TB is still widely spread in Pakistan. It is alarming to note that according to current ratings we rank eight amongst the countries with the highest TB instance. Compounded by rising drug resistance and HIV co-infection, this epidemic continues to spread relentlessly, making it one of the greatest challenges facing the country today.

The Government of Pakistan is fully cognizant of the significance and gravity of the issue and demonstrates unwavering commitment to the control of the twin AIDS and TB epidemics. We strongly believe that no single sector, ministry, department or organization can, in isolation, be responsible for addressing these challenges. It needs passionate and persistent, collective efforts from the political leadership of the country, national, international and community-based organization, civil societies and general populace, to turn the tide of these epidemics, through shared vision and dedication to the essential partnerships. I shall take this opportunity to add that "TB Anywhere is TB Everywhere", and only a battle fought by unified forces, is a battle won.

I am confident that the delegates attending the national conference 'On the Move Against Tuberculosis' will come up with innovative techniques and new ideas to combat and eliminate tuberculosis. The road ahead is complex but one that must be traversed with the best evidence available and a willingness to take brave and decisive action to reverse the lost ground and to make critical gains to control both HIV and TB.

I wish Foundation for 'Progress' and all the participants of the conference success in their future endeavors.

Welcome and the Convener's Speech: In his Welcome and Convener's speech, Dr. M.A Wajid said that: 'These are challenging times and all societies are confronting their most basic values. We can give life to millions, and hope to millions more, and move towards a better world. We know there's no short-term fix to the fundamental challenges that we face. The key to each solution is our involvement in them and finding new ways to solve our problems.

He added: 'In this current climate of uncertainty – the challenges are tremendous. We are being judged, more than ever, on our measurable results. The private sector and civil society play a crucial role if we are to succeed. New partnerships need to be formed; partnerships where all the parties are out to find the best possible solutions'.

‘This is the way forward and it is just the beginning. We know that the actions to tackle terror, hunger, disease and poverty will require careful decisions and sensitive responses. The key to action is however to ensure that the challenges we face are taken seriously at the highest levels of political leadership’.

Dr. Wajid said that: ‘Health is a key determinant of economic growth and development, while ill health is both a cause and effect of poverty. Aside from the serious consequences for social welfare, ill health deprives developing countries of human resources and the high cost of ill health reduces economic growth and limits the resources governments have available for investment in public health. As a result, improving health in developing countries is essential in order to reduce poverty, which is also the primary objective of all development policies in Pakistan.

He said further said: ‘Today one of the most pressing public health challenges both in Pakistan and indeed in other parts of the world is no other than tuberculosis – The biggest killer. The tubercles pandemic that we witness today is ironically due to the little attention that has been given to tuberculosis because it is a disease of the poor and poverty has played a leading role in accelerating the spread of TB. It continues to affect society's most vulnerable - those who live in abject poverty, are marginalized and economically and socially isolated, with poor housing, poor diet, poor education and risky behavior including reduced access to health services, a lack of trust in the health system and lack of organized community voices which further exacerbates the risk of TB spread’.

Coinfection with Mycobacterium tuberculosis and HIV (TB/HIV) and multidrug-resistant (MDR) and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) tuberculosis have made the disease and its control activities more complex and demanding. These challenges are so huge that in addition to the government, each one of us has a moral and a social responsibility to create jobs, find income generating alternatives and to provide financial support to sustain them through the entire treatment course.

Giving the statistics Dr. Wajid said: ‘It is estimated that today at any given moment more than 13 million people around the world are suffering from an active infection. TB kills someone approximately every 20 seconds — nearly 4,700 people every day, nearly 2 million each year, according to WHO’.

In Pakistan TB has been prevalent since long and continues to take its toll of human life and suffering. Today Pakistan ranks 8th amongst the countries with the highest burden of TB in the world. This killer disease has a prevalence of 365,000 cases per year, an incidence of 286,000 new cases per year and a mortality of 48,000 deaths per year.

Concluding, Dr. Wajid said that: ‘It is ironical that both the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his lady wife Ratti Jinnah were a causality to the tuberculosis. The great Quaid while visiting his personal physician Dr J.A.L. Patel in 1946, discovered that he was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and had less than two years to live. Because time was not on his side, the creator of Pakistan had to accept what he called a ‘moth-eaten’ Pakistan. And although Jinnah lived to see Pakistan he did not get an adequate chance to guide its destiny, as he wanted to, because he could attend his office for only ten months after the creation of Pakistan. But for tuberculosis the course of our nation’s history, would have been very different!

Lastly Dr. Wajid expressed his hope that keeping in view the objectives of the conference the participating delegates will share their experiences, best practices, discuss and dialogue, suggest and recommend new ways and means in the prevention, treatment and control of tuberculosis from Pakistan.

Inaugural Address: Inaugurating the conference, Dr. Sikandar Ali Mandhro, MPA and former Health Minister Sindh said that: ‘Today tuberculosis was one of the biggest challenges in the public health sector of the country. Its significance was further increased by the fact that tuberculosis mostly affected the poor and the marginalized. This disadvantage exacerbated the spread of tuberculosis among the families of the poor causing enormous socio-economic implications on the community.

Dr. Sikandar Ali Mandhro, further said that: ‘The need of hour was to muster all support and strength including resources to combat on war footings the already impending endemic of tuberculosis. This task was so enormous that no single individual, organization or community could alone face this challenge. It was necessary to embark upon partnerships as being advocated and carried out by Foundation for ‘Progress’.

Dr. Sikandar Ali Mandhro paid tribute to all those who had traveled long distances together and expressed their support and solidarity in their fight against tuberculosis. Dr. Mandhro especially congratulated and complimented Dr. M.A Wajid for his persistent efforts.

The Question and Answers Session was lively with full participation of delegates including observations and comments by the experts. The participants spoke on their experiences in context to the diagnosis and treatment suggesting innovative ways and techniques in managing difficult and resistant TB cases.

Vote of Thanks: The conference concluded as per the program with vote of thanks by Dr. Ismat Ara, Director TB Control Program Sindh on behalf of the organizing committee of the conference. Dr. Ismat Ara thanked all the participating delegates for their valuable time and keen interest in the conference proceedings. She also wished the delegates from other provinces a safe journey home.

Closing Address: The conference was declared closed by Dr. Ahmed Ali Shah, MPA Sindh Assembly with the hope and faith that the participating delegates would move forward in line with the objectives of the conference for the eradication of the scourge of tuberculosis from our beloved country, Pakistan. Dr. Ahmed Ali Shah also assured the delegates that the members of both the national and the provincial assemblies would strongly forward the recommendations and suggestions of the conference for consideration and possible implementation at the highest levels of the government.

Conclusion: Lastly, there was a group photograph of the organizing committee and the delegates to cherish the memories of the occasion. Finally Dr. Ahmed Ali Shah, MPA Sindh Assembly **‘Declared The Conference Closed’**.

