

Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Control and Care

Report of the Sixth Meeting
WHO Regional Office for Europe,
Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 February 2018

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ABSTRACT

The sixth meeting of the Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Prevention and Care (RCC-TB) was held at the WHO Regional Office for Europe on 21 February 2017. Participants included various stakeholder representatives and staff from WHO headquarters and the Regional Office. This report summarizes the key elements of the meeting, the outcome of working-group sessions and the next steps moving forward.

Keywords

TUBERCULOSIS
ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE
RCC-TB
M/XDR-TB

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---|
| AMR | Antimicrobial resistance |
| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| ERI-TB | European TB Research Initiative |
| EU/EEA | European Union/European Economic Area |
| GFATM | Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria |
| GTBC | Global TB Caucus |
| HSS | Health System Strengthening |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| MSF | Médecins Sans Frontières |
| M/XDR-TB | Multidrug- and Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis |
| NTP | National Tuberculosis Programme |
| PAS Center | the Center for Health Policies and Studies |
| RCC-TB | Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Control and Care |
| TB | Tuberculosis |
| TBEC | TB Europe Coalition |
| TB-REP | TB Regional Eastern European and Central Asian project |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Introduction

The Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Control and Care (RCC-TB) was established in September 2011 in line with the Consolidated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Multidrug- and Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis in the WHO European Region, 2011–2015 and its accompanying resolution (EUR/RC61/R7) endorsed at the sixty-first session of the Regional Committee for Europe in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 2011.

RCC-TB is an interactive platform for stakeholders, including donors, technical agencies, professional societies, civil society, and patient and community representatives, to exchange information related to tuberculosis (TB) and Multidrug- and Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (M/XDR-TB) and to advocate for effective response. Its overall mission is to help achieve universal access to evidence-based prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care across the WHO European Region (WHO EURO).

The RCC-TB aims further to enhance the involvement of civil society organizations and non-state actors in TB prevention and care in line with implementation of the Tuberculosis Action Plan for the WHO European Region 2016-2020, endorsed at the sixty-fifth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Vilnius, Lithuania, in September 2015 and the Global End TB Strategy endorsed by the sixty-seventh World Health Assembly (A67/11) on 14 May 2014.

The sixth meeting of RCC-TB was held at the WHO EURO on 21 February 2016, and involved members of the RCC-TB, as well as representatives of WHO country offices in the Region. The meeting was conducted in English and Russian with simultaneous interpretation and streamed online allowing stakeholders not to present at the meeting to participate in the discussions. The programme and list of participants are found in Annexes 1 and 2.

Objectives

The objectives of the meetings were to:

- Provide an overview of the challenges and progress regarding implementation of the Regional Tuberculosis Action Plan for the WHO European Region 2016-2020 and to discuss how RCC-TB can contribute to further enhance its implementation;
- Review the progress of the recommendations, and learn progress on key focus areas, of the fifth meeting of the RCC-TB, 16 November 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark;
- Dialogue on the follow-up of existing regional and global committal and advocacy documents (such as Berlin Declaration, Tallinn Charter; Beijing “Call on action”; Riga Declaration and Moscow Declaration) and develop a plan for how RCC-TB could contribute to follow-ups on existing declarations to agenda setting, and follow up of the High Level Meeting on TB at the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), scheduled to take place 18-20 September 2018 in New York City, United States; and
- Share partners’ update on future key RCC-TB relevant activities including preparation of World TB Day 2018 and explore possibilities for synergies and collaboration between partners throughout the year.

Opening

Ms Rosanna Flury, interim Chair of RCC-TB, and Dr Masoud Dara, Coordinator, Communicable Diseases & Programme Manager, TB, HIV and viral Hepatitis programme, Division of Health Emergencies & Communicable Diseases, WHO EURO, welcomed the participants and thanked them for their participation and continued commitment to the committee. Both took time to highlight the importance of upcoming and existing events and declarations on TB. In particular, they mentioned the importance of thinking out of the box and revamping political commitment to end TB in the Region.

They encouraged all participants to contribute actively during the meeting and to share their ideas and experiences towards achieving the mission and objectives of the RCC-TB. Especially the important role of civil society and communities was underlined and the importance of not working in silos, but rather complement and support each other's work.

Election of new chair

At the fifth meeting of the RCC-TB, Ms Rachel Crockett, Results UK was elected as new Chair of the RCC-TB, but due changes in Ms Rachel Crockett's employment it was necessary to elect a new Chairperson.

The interim Chair of the RCC-TB, Ms Rosanna Flury, Global TB Caucus (GTBC), was proposed as new Chairperson. In addition, Mr Lasha Gogvadze, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was put forward by the members as an additional candidate for the position. As there was more than one candidate it was up to the present members of the RCC-TB to vote for their preferred candidate. Ms Rosanna Flury was with the majority of the votes elected as new Chair with applause. Both candidates were thanked and acknowledge for their willingness to run.

Revision of Terms of References (ToR) for RCC-TB

Considering the increasing trend of TB/HIV co-infection in the Region and the opportunities for synergy effects with stakeholders in HIV and viral Hepatitis, it was proposed to expand the RCC-TB to also include representation from organizations working with HIV and viral Hepatitis. The suggestion was welcomed by the participants, highlighting how this would provide new opportunities for collaboration and offer a much-needed shared platform to find common grounds and work together. It was however also pointed out that attention needs to be given to the weight of the different communities, to ensure a fair representation and that all interests are represented.

With the objective to revise the ToR of the RCC-TB in line with the above decision, a small working group within the RCC-TB was established to take the work forward. The working group included GTBC, ICRC, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), TB Alert and WHO EURO.

Overview of the implementation of the Tuberculosis Action Plan for the WHO European Region 2016-2020

An overview of the implementation of the Regional TB action plan 2016-2020 was given by Dr Martin van den Boom, technical officer, WHO EURO. In terms of indicators, surveillance data on TB from the WHO EURO shows a decline in the number of new TB cases per year and that more are people treated successfully. MDR-TB detection rates are increasing and all MDR-TB patients notified are put on treatment. In addition, a further increase in MDR-TB treatment success has been observed.¹

Despite significant progress over the past years the main message is however that it is not enough to reach the targets and goals of the Regional TB action plan 2016-2020. To boost progress more innovation and “out-of-the-box” thinking is needed.

Achievements and activities undertaken in 2017 include a number of important publications, among them ‘Algorithm for laboratory diagnosis and treatment-monitoring of pulmonary tuberculosis and drug-resistant tuberculosis using state-of-the-art rapid molecular diagnostic technologies (2017)’² as well as a ‘Tuberculosis Laboratory Maintenance Plan (LMP) for Preventive and Routine Maintenance of Laboratory Equipment’³ and ‘Good Practices in the Prevention and Care of TB and DR-TB in Correction Facilities’⁴. In addition, much progress has been achieved through the TB Regional Eastern European and Central Asian project (TB-REP) including development of the Blueprint document for EECA, ‘A People-Centered Model of Care’⁵. Several trainings have been provided in relation to the TB-REP, but also trainings in early diagnosis of TB and MDR-TB, people-centred care and financing have been carried out. Much progress has been made on strengthening the involvement of civil society organizations (CSO) and in the area of TB and migration. Finally, high-level events like the Global Ministerial Conference on TB in Moscow in November 2017, the Estonian Presidency EU/EEA and Eastern Partnership countries TB/HIV conference in December 2017 and the NTP managers meeting in The Hague in 2017, have been important opportunities to push the agenda of the Regional TB Action Plan 2016-2020.

Priority areas for 2018 includes but not limited with:

- Intensive technical assistance to countries;
- Programme and epidemiology reviews;
- Roll out of the diagnostic algorithm, biosafety and maintenance;
- Capacity building/training activities;
- Final year of the TB-REP, roll out of patient-centered model of TB care and linkage to health system strengthening (HSS);
- Further exchange of good practices (i.e. on regional plan implementation and adaptation at country level);

¹ For more details please refer to the publication *Tuberculosis surveillance and monitoring in Europe 2017 and 2018*. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO Regional Office for Europe.

² <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/tuberculosis/publications/2017/algorithm-for-laboratory-diagnosis-and-treatment-monitoring-of-pulmonary-tuberculosis-and-drug-resistant-tuberculosis-using-state-of-the-art-rapid-molecular-diagnostic-technologies-2017>

³ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/355788/WHO-ELI-TB-Lab-Maintenance-Plan_ENG.PDF

⁴ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/360543/TB-prisons-9789289052917-eng.PDF

⁵ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/342373/TB_Content_WHO_PRO_eng_final.pdf?ua=1

- Support to countries on the GFATM application process and grant implementation;
- Strengthen capacity on research through the European TB Research Initiative (ERI-TB);
- Financial sustainability assessments in countries;
- Contribution to the UN Regional issue-based coalition on Health for sustainable development as a means of cross-sectoral corporation on health.

Review of progress on action points from the Fifth Meeting of RCC-TB

Ms Rosanna Flury presented, as new chair of the RCC-TB, progress made on the six actions points from the Fifth Meeting of the RCC-TB in Copenhagen on 16 November 2016. Of the six action points four had been successfully completed, these include:

- Develop fact sheets linking M/XDR-TB to the Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) agenda;
- Seek to interact more with elected public officials by coordinating with Global TB Caucus activities;
- Explore links between TB, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, vulnerable groups and gender equality in concept notes for consideration by the GFATM;
- Coordinate with WHO EURO to produce a document that clearly explains the roles of different providers and expounds specifically the advantages of a broader role for primary health care in national TB programmes (NTP).

Two action points were not yet completed and therefore suggested carried forward as an action point coming out of the Sixth RCC-TB Meeting. These were:

- Develop advocacy document on good practices, including patient and people centered model of care: the document need to include inputs from the final TB-REP blueprint report and refer to ethics and human rights;
- Work with WHO EURO to produce a short document that captures the evidence around the effect of treatment on infectivity and risks of transmission in the community, linking with the recently launched ERI-TB network.

RCC-TB members updates and priorities for 2018

The RCC-TB members gave an update on their key activities over the past year and main priorities for 2018. A priority for all members is preparations leading up to and follow-up activities of the High-Level Meeting on TB at the 73rd UNGA in September 2018.

RCC-TB members involved in the TB-REP, led by the Center for Health Policies and Studies (PAS Center), will continue their activities during the third and last year of the project, focusing on finalizing the project and documenting outcomes, but also preparing to continue the work e.g. through the upcoming request for proposals from the GFATM. They all expressed positive experiences over the past year. Members also expressed good experiences in collaborating with the TB Caucus and vice-versa.

Other events, which members will be prioritizing in 2018 include; the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in July 2018 with a global village session around domestic funding of programmes; the 49th Union World Conference on Lung Health meeting in The Hague, the Netherlands in October 2018; and the EU HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and Tuberculosis Civil Society Forum in May 2018 in Luxemburg, as well as other regional events.

Global and Regional commitments advocating TB response

Over the past decade several global and regional declarations and commitments on TB have been made. Dr Sayohat Hasanova, technical officer, WHO EURO gave an overview of the different charts, declarations and action plans and the importance of linking these to the upcoming United National General Assembly meeting on TB in September 2018 and its follow up. The main objectives of the following documents were presented:

- Berlin Declaration (2007)
- Tallinn Charter (2008)
- Beijing “Call for action” (2009)
- Riga Declaration (2015)
- Tuberculosis Action Plan for WHO European Region 2016–2020
- Moscow Declaration to End Tuberculosis (2017)
- (upcoming) High-level meeting on TB at the 73rd UNGA (September 2018).

Working group discussions

To enable smaller group discussions the participants were split into two working groups to discuss the following topics:

1. How can the RCC-TB contribute to further enhancing implementation of the Regional TB Action Plan 2016–2020;
2. How could RCC-TB contribute to follow-ups of existing regional and global commitments and advocacy documents (such as the Berlin Declaration; Tallinn Charter; Beijing “Call for action”; Riga Declaration and Moscow Declaration) to agenda setting of the 73rd session of the UNGA which take place on 18 – 20 September 2018 in New York City, USA.

As there was a significant overlap in the discussion point between the groups, it was decided that the plenary discussions and main points of the two groups were joint. The themes and topics in the group and plenary discussions are listed below:

- The upcoming high-level meeting on TB at the UNGA in September 2018 is an important opportunity to reconfirm and revamp the political commitments made to TB response both internationally, but also regionally and nationally. This commitment is important to enhance implementation of the Regional TB Action Plan 2016–2020.
- RCC-TB members need to coordinate their preparations to the High-Level Meeting on TB at the 73rd session of the UNGA and develop coherent key messages, which can be delivered by all partners to increase their impact.

- Select champion countries from the Region to take a lead in the discussions at the 73rd session of the UNGA.
- The (professional) use of social media, engaging with key journalists as allies and identifying regional ambassadors to TB. All RCC-TB members should share good contacts to journalists and other media influencers. This could be useful in the lead up to the 73rd session of the UNGA meeting.
- Developing country specific fact sheets to use for advocacy purposes.
- Mapping activities and initiative at different levels to facilitate synergy effects and avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of work.
- Consider developing a regional specific accountability framework, especially with regards to aspects around people-centred care. Keep the RCC-TB updated on the developments in the work of the framework on a regular basis.
- The essential role of CSO in TB response and the importance of making governments and policy makers see civil society as a partner.

Action points for RCC-TB

Based on discussions both during the group work and in plenary discussions a number of action point for the RCC-TB for 2018 were agreed upon.

- 1) **RCC-TB Terms of Reference (TOR):** Revise the ToR for RCC-TB with the objective to expand the Committee with stakeholders in HIV and viral Hepatitis
→ sub-working group within RCC-TB established with representation from GTBC (Rosanna Flury), ICRC (Lasha Gogvadze), MSF (Asgar Ismayilov), TB Alert (Paul Sommerfeld) and WHO EURO (Sayohat Hasanova and Martin Van den Boom).
- 2) **TB and the political agenda:** All member organizations of the RCC-TB to work with decision-makers and newly established Parliamentary Platforms on TB to further raise the political profile of the disease. Deadline: on continuous bases.
- 3) **73rd meeting of the UNGA:** Coordinate communication efforts leading up to the 73rd session of the UNGA in September 2018. Led by HIV TB Response (Paul Thorn).
- 4) **Accountability framework:** Coordinate RCC-TB inputs/suggestions, including Europe specific indicators and contribute to the discussions around the accountability framework lead by WHO Headquarters (WHO HQ workshop in March 2018). A sub-working group established led by RESULTS UK (Rachael Hore)
- 5) **Psychosocial support to TB patients:** Explore ways to identify, document and disseminate information and experience from the Region on psychosocial support to TB patients

- sub-working group within RCC-TB established - HIV TB Response (Paul Thorn), GTBC (Rosanna Flury), TB Alert (Paul Sommerfeld), WHO EURO (Sayohat Hasanova and Martin Van den Boom), PAS Center (Stela Bivol), Intilish (Tatyana Nikitina, Dmitrii Subotin), TBEC (Marine Ejuryan), and Alliance for Public Health (Yuliya Chorna).
- 6) **Strengthen and sustain work with civil society:** RCC-TB members should in their activities continuously encourage NTP managers to work with civil society. This will be supported by workshops run by TBEC on linking NTPs and civil society. Led by TB Alert (Paul Sommerfeld).
 - 7) **Data sharing:** Create an online platform or data repository for all members to share documents. This could be a shared Google Drive or Dropbox folder. Led GTBC (Rosanna Flury)
 - 8) **Monitoring progress:** On a quarterly basis assess progress made on the RCC-TB action points.

In addition, it was agreed to carry forward from the last year's RCC-TB meeting, two action points as they had still not been achieved. These are:

- Develop advocacy document on good practices, including patient and people centered model of care: the document need to include inputs from the final TB-REP blueprint report and refer to ethics and human rights and should be available in both English and Russian. Led by WHO EURO.
- Finalize the document on the effect of treatment on infectivity and risks of transmission in the community, linking with the recently launched ERI-TB network. Led by WHO EURO.

Closing

Ms Rosanna Flury and Dr Masoud Dara thanked the participants for their active participation in the workshop and for their continued contribution and dedication to the RCC-TB. The members were encouraged to maintain the good momentum, to share their work with the group and to continue to reach out to new partners with the objective of expanding the group.

Annex 1 – Programme

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE

WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION
REGIONALBÜRO FÜR EUROPA



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'EUROPE

ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ
ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ БЮРО

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| Sixth meeting of the Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Prevention and Care (RCC-TB) | |
| Copenhagen, Denmark | |
| 21 February 2018 | Original: English |

Programme

| Time | Topic | Speaker/lead |
|-------------|---|--|
| 08:30–09:00 | Registration | |
| 09:00–09:20 | Opening remarks | <p>Dr Nedret Emiroğlu, Director of Program Management, Director of Division of Health Emergencies and Communicable Diseases (DEC, WHO EURO)</p> <p>Dr Masoud Dara, Coordinator, Communicable Diseases & Programme Manager, TB, HIV and viral Hepatitis programme, Division of Health Emergencies & Communicable Diseases, WHO EURO</p> <p>Ms Rosanna Flury, RCC-TB interim Chair, European Regional Director, Global TB Caucus</p> |
| 09:20-09:40 | Introduction of participants | RCC-TB secretariat |
| 09:40-09:50 | Election of new chair | RCC-TB secretariat |
| 09:50–10:00 | Presentation of objectives of the meeting | RCC-TB secretariat |
| 10:00–10:20 | Overview of implementation of regional TB action plan 2016–2020 | Dr Masoud Dara, WHO EURO |
| 10:20–10:30 | Discussion | RCC-TB chair and all |
| 10:30–11:00 | Coffee break | |

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|---------------|---|--|
| 11:00–11:20 | Review the progress of the recommendations, and recap of progress on key focus areas, of the Fifth Meeting of the RCC-TB, 16 November 2016, Copenhagen Denmark | Ms Rosanna Flury , RCC-TB interim chair and RCC-TB secretariat |
| 11.20-11.45 | Discussion | RCC-TB chair and all |
| 11:45–12:00 | Dialogue on the follow-ups of existing Regional and Global Commitments and advocacy documents (such as Berlin Declaration; Tallinn Charter; Beijing “Call for action”; Riga Declaration and Moscow Declaration) in preparation for group work | Plenary discussion moderated by chair and RCC-TB secretariat |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | Working groups: 2 groups (1 hour): 3. How the RCC-TB can contribute to further enhancing implementation of the Regional TB Action Plan 2016–2020; 4. How RCC-TB could contribute to follow-ups of existing Regional and Global Commitments and advocacy documents (such as the Berlin Declaration; Tallinn Charter; Beijing “Call for action”; Riga Declaration and Moscow Declaration) to agenda setting of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 73) which take place on 18 – 20 September 2018 in New York City, USA | Group 1) chaired by RCC-TB secretariat; Group 2) chaired by Ms Rosanna Flury, RCC-TB interim chair Each group will concentrate on each topic for 30 minutes, and then rotate |
| 13:00–14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00–14:50 | Reporting back to plenary (40 minutes: 10 minutes per group plus discussion) | |
| 14.50 – 16.10 | Partners’ update on: 1. Key RCC-TB relevant accomplishments over the last year; 2. Key upcoming opportunities in the coming year, including plans for World TB Day 2018; 3. Key opportunities for collaboration between partners within the group | RCC-TB chair and Partners |
| 16.10-16.40 | Coffee break | |
| 16:40–17:00 | Conclusions and next steps | RCC-TB chair and RCC-TB secretariat |
| 17:00–17:10 | Closing remarks | Dr Masoud Dara, WHO EURO |

Annex 2 – List of Participants

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REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE

WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION
REGIONALBÜRO FÜR EUROPA



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'EUROPE

ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ
ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ БЮРО

Fifth Meeting of the Regional Collaborating Committee on Tuberculosis Prevention and Care (RCC-TB)

Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 February 2018

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The WHO Regional Office for Europe

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations created in 1948 with the primary responsibility for international health matters and public health. The WHO Regional Office for Europe is one of six regional offices throughout the world, each with its own programme geared to the particular health conditions of the countries it serves.

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