



Annual Report 2017

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre
Thimi, Bhaktapur

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Preface

The Annual Report of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) is being presented indicating the programmes, activities and achievements of the year 2017.

This is the Twenty-second consecutive comprehensive Annual Report STAC. This report includes a summary of the activities carried out by the Centre for the year 2017 along with introduction, goals, objectives, vision, mission and achievements of the Centre.

STAC implemented all regular activities assigned for the period of January to December 2017. His Excellency Secretary General SAARC, All the Directors at the SAARC Secretariat, Governing Board Members of STAC, National Managers of the NTPs and NACPs are highly appreciable for their invaluable support to implement the activities.

Besides the regular activities, the Centre has performed its activities in publishing the different scientific documents related to centre's activities and prevention of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Member States under the work of SAARC Regional Strategy for Control/Elimination of Tuberculosis 2013-17 as well as SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS 2013-17. Apart from other activities an important ToT on Diagnosis Treatment and Programmatic Management of Pediatric TB was conducted and developed SAARC Regional Pediatric Tuberculosis Guidelines and Training of Trainers Manual.

Let me take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Governments of SAARC Member States for their generous support. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the dignitaries of Ministries of Foreign/External Affairs of the SAARC Member States, His Excellency Mr. Amjad Hussain B Sial, Secretary General of SAARC and respected Members of the Governing Board of STAC. I would also like to offer my special thanks to Ms. Reshfa Rasheed, Director, Social Affairs Division, SAARC Secretariat for her continued support and guidance to implement the programmes.

The Centre continues to look forward to receive suggestions, guidance and comments on our activities, publications, website etc. so we can improve our activities as per the need of the people of the SAARC Region.



Dr. R. P. Bichha

Director, STAC

Executive Summary

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was set up in 1992, as a SAARC TB Centre which later on renamed as SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, working for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National Tuberculosis Control Programmes (NTPs) and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes (NACPs) of SAARC Member States (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

The Centre mainly coordinates for the activities related to control of TB and prevention of HIV & AIDS among the Member States, particularly in research, training, workshops etc. in technical, bio-medical, operational and other aspects to support Member States.

In this year 2017, STAC carried out all regular activities assigned to the Centre for the year.

Dr. V. P. Myneedu, Microbiologist (SAG), Professor and Head of Department, National Institute for TB and Respiratory Diseases (NITRD), New Delhi, India appointed as a consultant and visited STAC for the purpose of development of Terms of References (ToR) for SAARC Supra-national Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS.

The laboratory has always played a critical role in diagnosis of tuberculosis and monitoring of treatment. The basic aim in tuberculosis laboratory is to generate accurate and reliable test results. The one of the components of quality assurance is proficiency testing of Sputum Smear Microscopy (SSM). STAC conducted its thirteenth round proficiency testing of SSM for National Reference Laboratories of SAARC Member States. Feedback has already been given to the participating laboratories to ensure their quality.

For the purpose of disseminating the information regarding TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Member States, STAC has prepared different documents such as, Newsletter, Journal, Epidemiological Reports on TB and HIV/AIDS, Wall Calendar, circulation of Guidelines and Frameworks on HIV/AIDS available in the Member States.

A website has been maintained by uploading information related to TB and HIV/AIDS, as well as publications and information on activities of the Centre.

STAC Library has been set up as SAARC Resource Centre for TB and HIV/AIDS. The library is in the process of being developed as e-library.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARC is an organization of eight countries located in the South Asia and it stands for the South Asian Association for Regional Corporation (SAARC). This is an economic and geopolitical organization, established to promote socio-economic development, stability, welfare economics, and collective self-reliance within the Region. The first summit was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 7–8 December 1985 and was attended by the Government Representatives and Presidents from Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the Kings of Bhutan and Nepal, and the Prime Minister of India. The dignitaries signed the SAARC Charter on 8 December 1985, thereby establishing the regional association and to carry out different important activities required for the development of the Region. The summit also agreed to establish a SAARC secretariat in Kathmandu, Nepal and adopted an official SAARC emblem. Due to rapid expansion within the region, Afghanistan received full-member status and some countries are considered as observers. SAARC respects the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and national independence as it strives to attain sustainable economic growth.

The 3% of the area of the world is represented by SAARC countries. It is around 1.72 billion of the people and it is 24% of the world population¹.

The objectives of SAARC, as defined in its charter, are as follows:

- a) to promote the welfare of the peoples of SOUTH ASIA and to improve their quality of life;
- b) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials;
- c) to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of SOUTH ASIA;
- d) to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;
- e) to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
- f) to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;

¹ Data source: SAARC Epidemiological Response of Tuberculosis 2016

g) to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and

h) to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes

SAARC has established permanent diplomatic relations with the European Union and United Nations as observers. Foreign Ministers of the SAARC countries are met twice a year and the official meeting of the leaders of the SAARC Member States is held once a year. The recent 18th SAARC Summit was held in the Kathmandu, Nepal on 26th and 27th November 2014. It is planned to organize 19th SAARC Summit in Pakistan. This 19th Summit has been postponed.

Regional Centers have been established in Members States in order to promote regional cooperation. These Centers are handled by Boards of representatives from all SAARC Member States and every year separate Governing Board Meeting is organized for the evaluation and monitoring of the activities of the Centres and formulation of the programmes and budget for the approval of Standing/Programming Committee of SAARC.

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)

The Centre was established in 1992 as SAARC Tuberculosis Centre (STC) and started functioning from 1994. The Centre had been supporting the National Tuberculosis Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States. The Thirty-first session of Standing Committee of SAARC held in Dhaka on November 09th – 10th



(Office Building of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal)

2005, appreciating the efforts of the centre on TB/HIV co-infection and other works related to HIV/AIDS discipline and approved the renaming of the Centre as SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) with additional mandate to support SAARC Member States for

prevention of HIV/AIDS. Since then with its efforts and effective networking in the Member States the Centre is contributing significantly for control of both TB and HIV/AIDS.

Vision, Mission, Goal and Objective of STAC

The vision of the Centre is to be the leading institute to support and guide SAARC Member States to make the region free of TB and HIV/AIDS and the mission is to support the efforts of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes through evidence based policy guidance, coordination and technical support.

The goal of the Centre is to minimize the mortality and morbidity due to TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region and to minimize the transmission of both infections until TB and HIV/AIDS cease to be major public health problems in the SAARC Region and the objective of the Centre is to work for prevention and control of TB HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National TB Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Programmes of the SAARC Member Countries.

Functions of STAC

- To act as a Regional Co-ordination Centre for NTPs and NACPs in the Region.
- To promote and coordinate action for the prevention of TB/HIV co-infection in the Region.
- To collect, collate, analyze and disseminate all relevant information regarding the latest development and findings in the field of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region and elsewhere.
- To establish a networking arrangement among the NTPs and NACPs of Member States and to conduct surveys, researches etc.
- To initiate, undertake and coordinate the Research and Training in Technical Bio-medical, operational and other aspects related to control of Tuberculosis and prevention of HIV/AIDS in the Region.
- To monitor epidemiological trends of TB, HIV/AIDS and MDR-TB in the Region.
- To assist Member States for harmonization of policies and strategies on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection.

- To assist National TB Reference Laboratories in the Region in quality assurance of sputum microscopy and standardization of culture and drug sensitivity testing and implementation of bio-safety measures.
- To carry-out other important works identified by the Programming Committees/Governing Board.

Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC

Twenty-sixth meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was held on 11th – 12th January 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Representatives from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan attended in the meeting from Member States participated in the meeting. Ms. Fathimath Najwa, Director (representative of SAARC Secretary General), SAARC Secretariat and Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (Member Secretary) also participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Afghanistan.

The Board reviewed the activities carried out by the Centre in 2016 and recommended the programmes & budget for 2017, which are as follows:

Recommended Programmes of the Centre for the year 2017

1. SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers and Cross Boarder Issues on TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes
2. SAARC Regional Training on Operational Research on TB and HIV/AIDS
3. SAARC Regional Training on TB for Microbiologist on Culture & DST, Gene Xpert / NAAT and its maintenance
4. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers on Diagnosis, Treatment and Programmatic Management of Pediatric TB
5. Exposure visit to observe the best practices on TB in India
6. Exposure visit to observe the best practices on HIV/AIDS in Nepal
7. SAARC Training on Management of Information for Action
8. Development of framework and Guidelines for Private Public Mix by STAC
9. Participation in International Conferences by STAC
 - i. Union World Conference on Lung Health OR
 - ii. International AIDS Conference on HIV/AIDS
10. Participating in the regional conferences in the member States.
11. Participation in the Review of activities NTPs and NACPs/ in the SAARC Member States by STAC.
12. Meeting of collaborating Institutions for Strengthening of Networking WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA & other collaborating institutes.
13. Fourteenth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Member States
14. Conferment of SAARC Award on Tuberculosis- 2017

15. Public Awareness and Advocacy programmes on TB and HIV/AIDS

i World TB Day- 2017

- Interaction Programme/Joint Activities
- Preparation and publication of advocacy materials and distribution to the Member States

ii World AIDS Day - 2017

- Interaction/ Joint Activities
- Preparation and publication of Advocacy materials/booklet and distribution to the Member States

iii SAARC Charter Day - 2017

- Awareness Programme/Joint Programme
- Preparation and publication related documents and distribution to the Member States.

16. E-circulation of STAC Publications, related documents and other materials

17. Review of Article for SAARC Journals of TB Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS

18. Procurement of chemicals and glassware for the STAC Laboratory work

19. **Printings/Bindings**

i. Binding of STAC Newsletters

ii. Printing STAC Journal of Tuberculosis Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS

iii. Binding of SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection 2016- E-circulation

iv. Binding of SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS Control 2016 -E-circulation

v Printing of SAARC Regional Training Manual for ART

vi Printing of SAARC Regional Training Manual for Programme Management of Drug Resistance TB

vii Printing of SAARC Regional Program Guidelines on diagnosis and management of pediatric TB

viii Printing of the SAARC Regional Training Manual on pediatric TB

ix Printing of SAARC Regional Training Manual for Infection Control at Health Facilities

x. Printing of Wall Calendar 2018 / promotional materials (500 copies)

- xi Binding of Annual Report- 2016
 - xii Binding of Fourteenth Round proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs and SAARC Members States by STAC
 - xiii Printing/binding of other Documents/ Publications;
 - xiv Update regional data on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection and analysis to generate evidence to the region
20. E-circulation/distribution of STAC Publications
21. **Strengthening of STAC Library**
- i Purchase and subscription of scientific books and journals on TB and HIV/AIDS
 - ii Software maintenance (Alice Software)
 - iii Digitalization of library resources (TB, HIV/AIDS and Laboratory) and link to STAC Website by STAC
 - Networking among the Medical Libraries in the Region
 - iv Collection, Compile and e-circulation of published scientific articles and important news related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the national daily news papers/journals.

Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC



(Governing Board Members and Official)

Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC

The Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was held on 29-30 November, 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Governing Board Members from the Governments of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka along with representatives of SAARC Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal, participated in the Meeting.

Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat delivered the opening remarks. She conveyed the best wishes of His Excellency the Secretary-General of SAARC for successful organization of this meeting and fruitful deliberations. She appreciated the efforts of STAC for completing all its activities for the year 2017.

Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC while delivering his opening remarks thanked the Member States and SAARC Secretariat for excellent support and cooperation for all the activities. He also highlighted achievements and common problems and contrarians of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programs.

According to the Rules of Procedure for the Governing Board of SAARC Regional Centre, Dr. Rouseli Haq, Director, MBDC & Programme Manager, Governing Board Member from Government of Bangladesh was elected the chairperson of the Board for the Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Governing Board Meeting of STAC.

While reviewing the performance of the STAC of the year 2017, the Board expressed its satisfaction to the Centre for completing all of its activities and declared STAC as a Centre of Excellence.

The Board recommended the Budget and Activities of the Centre for the year 2018 for approval of Programming Committee.

While discussing one of the activity proposed by the Centre for the year 2018, the Board felt that the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre is one regional Centre of SAARC in the health

sector and technical assistance of STAC would be helpful to the Member States in the Disease Epidemic/Disaster urgency/ Cross Border/Migration Health issues.

The Director, STAC proposed that the Staff Day may be celebrated on 16 January of every year and the Board approved the proposal.

The Board reviewed the activities carried out by the Centre in 2017 and recommended the programmes & budget for 2018, which are as follows:

Recommended Programmes of the Centre for the year 2018

No.	Activities	Venues
1	SAARC Regional Training on Diagnosis and treatment of pediatric TB	Sri-Lanka
2	SAARC Seminar on Management of TB Control Programme in Urban/Slums in the SAARC Member States	Bangladesh
3	The SAARC Regional 4 th Meeting of Heads/Chief of Identified National TB and HIV/AIDS Laboratories in SAARC	India
4	SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers on TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes and cross border issue	Maldives
5	SAARC Expert Group Meeting on HIV/AIDS	Bhutan/Sri-Lanka
6	SAARC Training of Trainers on Infection Control for TB /HIV	Nepal
7	SAARC Regional Workshop on Structured Operational Research (SOR) in TB and HIV/AIDS in Region	Pakistan
8	Development of framework / strategy on Migrant Health /Cross border issues in the SAARC Member State through Technical Assistant by STAC & circulation to National Programmes/Manager's Meeting.	STAC
9	Joint SAARC Monitoring Missions for appraisal of TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programs in the Region by STAC.	7 Member States
10	Technical Assistant support to the NTP/NACP, of Member and STAC by providing/hiring short term consultancy, utilizing the Expertise from the Region without financial liability to respective national programmes of Member States	NTP/NACP, of Member States (as per demand)
11.	Rapid Response in Epidemic/disaster urgency in the SAARC Member States. -Two countries -3 members team	two member States
12.	The SAARC Regional Meeting on TB/HIV Co-infection <i>(Videos Conference Method) by STAC)</i>	By STAC
13.	SAARC Regional Technical Consultation/s among the Programme Managers (TB and HIV/AIDS) by STAC <i>(Videos Conference Method) by STAC)</i>	By STAC
	Research Activities	STAC/Member States

14.	Study on Tuberculosis and Diabetes Mellitus in Nepal by STAC	Nepal
15	Study on Impact of Migratory population on TB Epidemiology in SAARC Region – STAC	By STAC
16	Study to determine causality of EPTB in Bhutan	Bhutan
17	Study on Contact tracing among Pediatric TB patients in Afghanistan and Sri-Lanka	Afghanistan & Sri-Lanka
18.	Additional yield of activities case finding through house survey in selected district of Afghanistan with lower case notification rate.	Afghanistan
19.	Comparative evaluation of treatment for MRD TB with and without co-morbidity a retrospective analysis in Bangladesh	Bangladesh
	Regular Activities	STAC
20.	Conferment of SAARC Prize on HIV/AIDS-2018	Open to all Member States
21	Participation in International Conferences by STAC	STAC
22	Participating in the conferences/Workshops/Meetings/consultations in the Member States.	STAC
23	Participation in the Review of activities NTPs and NACPs/Communicable diseases in the SAARC Member States by STAC.	STAC
24	Skill development of GSS by attending field related Trainings/Workshops/Conference ect	STAC
25	Meeting of collaborating Institutions for Strengthening of Networking WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA & other collaborating institutes.	STAC
26	Fifteenth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Member States	STAC
27	Public Awareness and Advocacy programmes on TB and HIV/AIDS	STAC
i.	World TB Day- 2018 - Interaction Programme/Joint activities - Preparation and publication of advocacy materials and distribution to the Member States	STAC
ii	World AIDS Day-2018 - Interaction/ Joint activities - Preparation and publication of Advocacy materials/booklet and distribution to the Member States	STAC
iii	SAARC Charter day- 2018 - Awareness programme/Joint programme - Preparation and publication related documents and distribution to the member states.	STAC
28	Review of Article for SAARC Journals of TB Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS	STAC
29	Procurement of chemicals and glassware for the STAC Laboratory work	STAC
30	Library Workshop & networking of STAC Library with Medical Students in Nepal	STAC
31	Printings/Bindings	STAC
i	Printing STAC Journal of Tuberculosis Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS Issues: 3 (300 copies)	STAC
ii	Printing of SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS- (300 copies)	STAC

iii	Revision/updating and Printing of Vision Document of SATC (300 copies)	STAC
32	Printing of Wall Calendar 2019 / promotional materials (500 copies)	STAC
33	E-circulation/distribution of STAC Publications	STAC
34	Purchasing/renewal of books & journals for Library	STAC
	Desk/correspondence method Activities	
35	Revision of SAARC Regional Strategy on ACSM (by STAC desk/correspondence method) & circulation to National Programmes/Manager's Meeting	STAC
36	Revision of Vision Document of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (by STAC desk/correspondence method)	STAC
37	Situation Assessment and Revision of SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS by STAC (correspondence/desk method) & circulation to Expert Group Meeting	STAC
38	Networking with Training Institutions (Health/TB/HIV/AIDS/Lab.) in the SAARC Region by STAC (correspondence/desk method)	STAC
39	Updating the list of pool of experts in the Region by STAC with A separate Special Pool of Senior Medical Microbiologists from the Region involving both National/ Supra-national TB and HIV/AIDS Reference from the Region (at least two from each country) which may be a Regional Technical Group for the SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS (correspondence/desk method)	STAC
40	Updating/strengthening of list of External Reviewer for scientific journal/documents by STAC (correspondence/desk method)	STAC
41	Assessments of Implementation Status of SAARC Regional Strategy on Control/Elimination of TB by STAC (Desk/correspondence method) & circulation to National Programmes/Manager's Meeting	STAC
42	Establishment and networking of Pool of Master Trainers in the Region (Desk/correspondence method)	STAC
43	Development of Curriculum of different level of Trainings to be organized by STAC(Desk/correspondence method) & circulation to National Programmes/Manager's Meeting	STAC
44	Strengthening of Epidemiological Data Bank & Epidemiological networks in the Region on TB and HIV/AIDS (Desk/correspondence method) & circulation to National Programmes/Manager's Meeting	STAC
45	Compilation and Epidemiological/statistical analysis of Reports of Research and studies conducted under the programme Cost Budget of STAC since 2010-2016	STAC
46	Networking among the Medical Libraries in the Region (Desk/correspondence method)	STAC
47	Compilation , epidemiological/statistical analysis and binding of all Research Reports binding and circulation to Member States	STAC
48	Strengthening of digital access of Library resources to the visitors	STAC
49	Collection, Compile and e-circulation of published scientific articles and important news related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the national daily news	STAC

	papers/journals (through internet/websites)	
50	Update regional data on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection and analysis to generate evidence to the region (correspondence method & E-circulation)	STAC
	Printing/binding of other Documents/Reports/Publications	
51	Binding of SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection 2018- E-circulation	STAC
52	Binding of SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS Control 2018 - E-circulation	STAC
53	Binding of Annual Report- 2017	STAC
54	Binding of Fifteenth Round proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs and SAARC Members States by STAC	STAC
55	Binding of STAC Newsletters- Issues:3 –E-circulation	STAC
56	TB Culture and DST at SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory	STAC
57	Staff Day	STAC

**Activities carried out by the
SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre in 2017**

1. SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers and Cross Border Issues on TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes, 29th to 31st May, 2017, Bhutan

**(Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC
delivering opening remarks)**



1.1 Introduction

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Nepal in association with the National TB Control Programme and National AIDS Control Programme, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan jointly organized a “SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers and Cross Border Issues on TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes” in Thimphu, Bhutan from 29th to 31st May, 2017. The meeting was participated by 18 participants from SAARC Member States, namely Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

1.2 Objective

- The objectives of the meeting were to share the achievements, experiences and innovations on TB and HIV/AIDS by the SAARC Member States and learn from best practices.
- to identify the regional activities of STAC according to felt the needs of the region.
- to discuss issues and challenges faced by the SAARC Member States on TB and HIV/AIDS in order to suggest possible solutions and
- to discuss and share the information on Cross Border Referral Mechanisms related to TB and HIV/AIDS patients in border area of the SAARC Member States.

1.3 Participation

The meeting was participated by 18 participants from SAARC member countries. (See annex 1)

1.4 Inaugural Session

Hon'ble Minister Mr. Tandin Wangchuk, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan graced the occasion as Chief Guest and inaugurated the programme. In inaugural speech Hon'ble Minister thanked the SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Center for organizing the programme in Bhutan and highlighted the importance of the Programme Managers' Meeting along with the meeting on Cross Border Issues for the Control and Prevention of TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC Region. He also underscored the vulnerability associated with cross border migration and the challenges in assuring comprehensive medical interventions across the borders. Hon'ble Minister appealed to united for resolving the issues concerning to cross border. He expressed his good wish to all for the success of the meeting. Mr. Namgay Tshering, (STAC Governing Board Member from Bhutan) the Chief Programme Officer, Communicable Disease Division, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan extended welcome to all the delegates of the meeting. He expressed his gratitude to Hon'ble Minister for Health, Royal Government of Bhutan for his presence inauguration of the meeting. Mr. Tshering congratulated Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha for his new responsibility of Director of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre delivered remarks in the opening ceremony. He propounded his gratitude to the Royal Government of Bhutan for concurrence to organize this meeting in Bhutan. He thanked Hon'ble Health Minister, Royal Government of Bhutan for gracing the inaugural session of the programme. Dr. Bichha also highlighted the overall objective of the meeting and problem raised by the migration of the patients in National Programmes of TB and HIV/AIDS. On behalf of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre, he also expressed his gratitude to the Governments of SAARC Member States for giving high priority to STAC activities and nominating the high level participants to participate in the meeting.

1.5 Discussion and Technical Session

Mr. Namgay Tshering, (STAC Governing Board Member from Bhutan) Chief Programme Officer, Communicable Disease Division, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan Chaired the meeting and Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan (STAC Governing Board Member from Pakistan), Manager, National TB Control Programme (NTP), Government of Pakistan Co-chaired the meeting.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC presented the Introduction of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and requested SAARC Member States for their cooperation to accomplish the incomplete activities of STAC.

Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC made a presentation on Current Situation of Cross Border Issues related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region. He also presented challenges and possible intervention to overcome these issues.

1.6 Country presentations as Technical Session

Dr. Noor Aga Zahid, National TB Coordinator from the Ministry of Public Health, Kabul, Afghanistan presented TB epidemiology and achievements of NTP Afghanistan. Mr. Lekey Khandu, Programme Officer, National HIV/AIDS & STIs Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan presented the National HIV/AIDS Control Programme in Bhutan. Mr. Tshewang Rinzin, Dy. Chief Programme Officer from National Tuberculosis Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan presented status of National TB Control Programme in Bhutan. Dr. Raghuram Shyamsunder Rao, DADG (TB), Central TB Division, Directorate of Health Services, Nirman Bhawan, Government of India presented status of National TB Control Programme in India. The second session of the discussion and presentation was chaired by Dr. Raghuram Shyamsunder Rao, India and co-chaired by Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director, National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases, Sri Lanka. Dr. Ramesh Bikram Singh, Deputy Director-General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal presented status of National TB Control Programme in Nepal. Mr. Shambhu Kafle, Senior Public Health Officer, National Centre for AIDS and STD Control, Government of Nepal presented status National HIV/AIDS Control Programme in Nepal. Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan, Manager, National TB Control Programme (NTP), Government of Pakistan presented status of National TB Control Programme, Pakistan. Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director, National Programme for TB Control & Chest Diseases, Government of Sri-Lanka made presentation on TB Control Diagnosis and Cross Boarder Issues in Sri Lanka. Dr. Sisira Liyanage, Director, National STD/AIDS Control Programme, Government of Sri-Lanka presented the paper on Current situation of HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka. Ms. Lila Adhikari, Laboratory Officer, National TB Reference Laboratory, Royal Center for Disease Control, Government of Bhutan presented a paper on Laboratory situation in Bhutan.

Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC made a presentation on SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory on TB and HIV/AIDS.

1.7 Recommendations

A Brainstorming discussion was made for finding the solution on the problems related with strengthening of cooperation and coordination among the National TB and HIV/AIDS Reference Laboratory of SAARC Member States and SAARC Supranational Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS. The meeting made the recommendations regarding the current issues. Meeting also recommended Programme Activities of STAC for the Year 2018 and list out some activities for the approval of STAC Governing Board/SAARC Programming Committee.

1.8 Closing Session

Closing Ceremony was graced by Dr. Ugen Dophu, Secretary for Health, Royal Government of Bhutan, as Chief Guest. Mr. Namgay Tshering, welcome him in the closing ceremony on behalf of all delegates. Dr Kanthi Ariyaratne extended gratitude on behalf of the delegates for excellent organization of the meeting.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC awarded Letter of Appreciation to Mr. Namgay Tshering and his team for their invaluable contribution to organize the programme. Prof. Bichha delivered a vote of thanks expressed gratitude to the Royal Government of Bhutan for concurrence for the STAC activity and arrangement of the excellent hospitality and meeting.

Dr. Ugen Dophu, Secretary, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan delivered closing remarks. He highlighted why people moving from one country to another, he also mentioned that cross border issue is a very sensitive subject and when taking decisions this factors should considered carefully. He also highlighted the importance of proper referral mechanism across country in border areas.

2. SAARC Regional Training on Operational Research on TB and HIV/AIDS, 12th to 16th June 2017, Jaipur, India

(Inauguration of the Programme)



2.1 Introduction

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Nepal and Central Tuberculosis Division, Government of India jointly organized a SAARC Regional Training on Operational Research on TB and HIV/AIDS at Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), Jaipur, India from 12th to 16th June 2017.

2.2 Objective

The training program is specifically designed to enhance the participants' capacity in planning, designing and conducting operational research in TB and HIV/AIDS, and its utilization in improving program efficiency and effectiveness. The specific objectives of the programme are:

- To increase the capacity of program manager of TB and HIV/AIDS and relevant staff of member countries on concept, approaches and methodologies of operational research.
- To identify the priority research areas on TB and HIV/AIDS.
- To build capacities of the participants in planning, designing and conducting operational research.
- To develop skills in developing research protocols on identified research areas, and their implementation.
- To promote the utilization of operational research results for decision making at various levels of both TB and HIV/AIDS programs in SAARC member countries.

Learning Objectives

At the end of training program, the participants will be able:

- To describe concepts, importance, and use of operational research in TB and HIV/AIDS program
- To identify problems and priority research areas in TB and HIV/AIDS programs
- To conceptualize research question and develop objectives of operational research projects
- To develop research protocols for OR
- To plan and implement operational research projects
- To conduct data analysis, write report and utilization of results in improving effectiveness and efficiency of TB and HIV/AIDS program

Opening session:

Dr. Anoop Khanna, Associate Professor, IIHMR, open the programme by addressing welcome remarks. Dr. Vivek Bhandari, President IIHMR University, Jaipur, delivered his remarks and emphasized the importance of Operational Research in NTP as well as in NACP. He congratulated the Director, STAC for organizing this training programme in Jaipur, India. He extended his best wish for successful completion of the programme. Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Additional DDG National Programme Manager, (TB) Government of India delivered his remarks. He mentioned the collaboration between STAC and IIHMR to go ahead for future course of time. He assured the cooperation from the Government of India for future activities of STAC. Prof. Shashi Kant Jha, Head, Department of Community Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and Dr. P. R. Sodani Dean, (Training), IIHMR delivered their opening remarks and mentioned the value of the working with National Programmes of TB and HIV/AIDS.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC delivered his remarks and expressed his thankfulness to the National Programme Managers of TB and HIV/AIDS Control of SAARC Member States. He also thanked staff of IIHMR for excellent facilitating in organizing this programme. He highlighted the role of STAC in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and TB in SAARC Region. He propounded his gratefulness to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India for the concurrence to organize the programme in India. He also expressed his gratitude to all SAARC Member States for sending high level participants to participate in this programme.

Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologists, STAC delivered vote of thanks.

2.3. Participatnts:

The training was participated by 15 participants and 4 resource persons from SAARC member states. (See annex 2)

2.4 Technical session

The session started with the presentation of Dr. Ajith Weerakoon on Introduction of SAARC TB and AIV/AIDS Centre. Dr S. D. Gupta, Chairman, IIHMR, delivered presentation on the introduction of Operational Research and Dr. J. P. Singh, IIHMR, made a presentation on Problem Identification, Hypothesis and Objectives. Participants were divided into 2 groups for identification of research problem, objectives and formulation of hypothesis.

Dr. S. D. Gupta presented a paper on Operational Research designs. Dr. Anoop Khanna presented a paper on Methods of data collection. Dr. J. P. Singh presented a paper on sampling and sample size determination. This session was held in computer lab for practical experience on SPSS and Microsoft excel. It was also discussed on Operational Plan and Budgeting for Operational Research as well as Ethics in Research on Human Subject and Reporting, Dissemination and Use of Operational Research. Operational Research Protocols were developed and presented by participants.

2.5 Closing Session

Dr. S. D. Gupta delivered remarks and congratulated all participants and organizers for the success of the programme. He acknowledged the efforts made by STAC for prevention and control TB and HIV/AIDS in the region. He also highlighted the value of the Operational Research in TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes.

Prof. Dr. Shashi Kant Jha, Resource Persons, gave his remarks and appreciated for excellent arrangement of the training by STAC and Government of India. He also thanked STAC for giving opportunity to take part as resource person in this training programme.

Dr. P. R. Sodani, Dean Training, IIHMR University, Jaipur, appreciated the efforts of STAC in the field of TB & HIV/AIDS. He spoke on the role and importance of research in TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes.

Prof. Dr. R. P Bichha, Director, STAC, Nepal delivered his closing remarks. He extended special thanks to the Dr. S. D. Gupta, Dr. R. P. Sodani and Dr. Anoop Khanna & officials for their kind support to make the training a grand success. He also extended special thanks to Resource Persons and participants from SAARC Member States for their active participation and remarkable inputs.

All the participants and Resource Persons were awarded certificates for their participation in the five days training. The certificate was provided jointly by Director, STAC, and Chairman of the IIHMR.

3. SAARC Regional Training on TB for Microbiologist on Culture & DST, Gene Xpert/CBNAAT and its Maintenance, 10th to 14th July 2017, New Delhi, India

(Dr. Rohit Sarin, Director, NITRD, New Delhi inaugurating the programme)



3.1 Introduction

SAARC Regional Training on TB for Microbiologist on Culture & DST, GeneXpert/NAAT (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test) and its Maintenance” was organized jointly by the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India at National Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases (NITRD), New Delhi from 10th to 14th July 2017. Two participants working in TB, NTRL/ITRL (Microbiologists or Medical Technologist or Laboratory Technicians) from each SAARC Member States namely Afghanistan, Bhutan, Indian, Maldives, Nepal and Sri-Lanka participated in the training. The sixteen participants attended the programme.

3.2. Objective

Objectives of the Training were;

- to improve the capacity of the NRLs for Culture & DST services under National TB Control Programme as well as be capable to participate in surveillance activities and to produce trainers to train the personnel on Culture, DST & GeneXpert(NAAT) of *M. tuberculosis* and their maintenance.

3.3. Participants

The Training was participated by 15 participants form SAARC member states. (See annex 3)

3.4 Opening Session

Prof. Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC and Dr. Rohit Sarin, Director, NITRD and other dignitaries jointly opened the training by lighting the traditional lamp.

The Director, NITRD welcomed the participants and resource persons & delivered his remarks. He thanked the STAC for selecting NITRD as training venue and appreciated the role played by the Centre for control of Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in the Region. He also mentioned about revolutionary changes in the TB Laboratory areas in the world and NITRD is ready to collaborate with STAC for operational of SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS.

The Director, STAC delivered the opening address and he highlighted the importance of the Training Course and appreciated the support rendered by the RNTCP, Government of India and NITRD for excellent arrangement. He mentioned about the development of SAARC Supra-national Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS and explained about series of discussions, meetings and works in the couple of months for procurement of equipment and functioning of laboratory.

Dr. Ajith Weekakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC delivered a remarks in opening ceremony and he highlighted the objective and expected outcomes of this training Course.

Prof. Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/ Head, Department of Microbiology, NITRD, New Delhi, delivered vote of thanks.

3.5 Technical Sessions

Prof. Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC presented on Introduction of STAC along with situation of TB in the SAARC Region. During the presentation he also highlighted role of laboratory experts and laboratory settings in the country level. He also used the forum to spread the information related to Vacancy of Senior Microbiologist at the STAC.

The demonstration, presentations and practices were performed by Dr. Jyoti Arora Consultant Microbiologist, Dr. M. Bhalla, Microbiologist (SAG), Dr. Niti Singh, Consultant Microbiologist, Dr. Gavish and Dr. Himanshu Jha, Dr. Ajoy Verma, Dr. Ritu Singhal, from NITRD.

3.6 Closing session

Mr. Arun Kumar Jha, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India attended at the closing ceremony as Chief Guest. Dr. Sunil D. Khaparde, DDG (TB) Directorate General Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Governments of India attended as special guest in the Ceremony.

Mr. Arun Kumar Jha, the chief guest of the closing ceremony thanked to STAC for organizing the Training in India and appreciated the efforts of the Centre for Control TB and HIV/AIDS Control in the Region and re-iterated the commitments of government of India regarding the

support for activities of STAC. The special guest Dr. Sunil D. Khaparde thanked Director, STAC.

Dr. Rohit Sarin, Director, NITRD, thanked all the participants and Resource Persons for their active participation for making the training successful. Dr. V. P. Myneedu highlighted the outcomes of the training.

Dr. Mahen Kothalawala, Consultant Microbiologist, Kandy Teaching Hospital, Sri-Lanka spoke in the closing ceremony on behalf of the participants and highlighted their satisfaction. He requested to the SAARC to organize the Hands-on Training in future.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC delivered the vote of Thanks. He propounded his gratitude to the Government of India for timely concurrence to organize this activity in India as well as Governments of SAARC Member States He thanked NITRD family, Participants and Resource Person for making the training successful. Certificates were awarded to participants and facilitators

3.7 Outcome of the Training

The participants learned laboratory standards required for TB culture and DST and liquid culture systems (MGIT 960). They also got knowledge on policy and guidelines on TB diagnosis. Similarly, the participants learned infection control and prevention standards and practices on MTB infection prevention and control in TB laboratory. The participants also learned sterilization and disinfection techniques applicable for TB laboratory as well as they became able to identify the problems and their solutions in culture and DST. They also learned FM microscopy technique and External Quality Assurance System and to assess the performance of their TB laboratory. They also learned more about GeneXpert/CBNAAT and maintenance of Gene pert, etc.

4. SAARC Regional Training of Trainers (ToT) on Diagnosis, Treatment and Programmatic Management of Pediatric TB, 7th to 11th August 2017 Colombo, Sri Lanka.

(Hon'ble Minister Dr. Rajitha Senarathne, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Government of Sri Lanka addressing at the closing session of the training programme)



4.1 Introduction

A “SAARC Training of Trainers on Diagnosis, Treatment and Programmatic Management of pediatrics TB” was organized jointly by SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and National Programme of Tuberculosis Control and Chest Diseases (NPTCCD), Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Government of Sri Lanka in Colombo from 7th to 11th August 2017.

Nineteen participants participated in the programme. Participants were Pediatricians, Chest Physicians, Medical Officers, Health Officers etc. from all eight SAARC Member States, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Facilitators and Resource Persons of the training included Consultant Pediatricians, Consultant Microbiologist, Consultant Radiologist, Consultant Pathologist, Consultant Respiratory Physicians working in different Children Hospitals in Sri Lanka and Nepal facilitated in the programme.

4.2 Objectives

Following were the objectives of the training:

- To strengthen participants’ capacity in the clinical management of Pediatric TB

- To discuss and share experiences of clinical management, challenges to be faced in diagnosing & treating of childhood TB and

4.3. Participants:

The Training was participated by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated the programme andresource person from Nepal and host country Sri-Lanka (See annex 3)

4.4 Opening Ceremony:

Mr. Janaka Sugathadasa, Secretary, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Government of Sri Lanka inaugurated the Training Programme by lighting beautifully decorated lamps on the different symbolic bowl-ponds representing the eight SAARC Member States.

Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director, NPTCCD delivered welcome address. and welcomed all participants, facilitators, resource persons, guests, dignitaries and officials in the programme.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC delivered his remarks and express his gratitude and happiness for the presence of high-level dignitaries from Government of Sri Lanka which reflects that there is strong commitments for prevention & control of TB & HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region.

Dr. T. L. C. Somatunga, Deputy Director General (Medical Service), DGHS, Government of Sri Lanka also delivered her remarks in the inaugural ceremony of the programme.

Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Participant from India as well as Governing Board Member of STAC delivered his remarks and highlighted the challenges to be faced in management of childhood TB and role to be played by STAC to support the Member States.

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC delivered Vote of Thanks. He thanks Governments of SAARC Member States for supporting STAC and nominating the high level participants for the programme. He thanked Secretary, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Government of Sri Lanka for his presence and inaugurating the parogramme. He also thanked Director, NPTCCD and her team for their generous support and made the programme a grand success. He thanked all participants and resource persons, facilitators, guest-lecturers and officials for their support and co-operation in the programme.

On behalf of the STAC, Dr. Ajith expressed his gratitude to His Excellency Secretary General of SAARC and Director of SAARC Secretariat for continuous support and guidance for organizing the STAC activities not only in the Sri Lanka but also in the other SAARC Member States.

4.5 Technical Sessions

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC presented his presentation on “Introduction of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, its vision/mission and objectives along with its achievements & progress. He also highlighted the objectives of this training. The country presentations started in alphabetical order of the member country where the participants presented their presentations on the status of childhood TB in respective country.

Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director, NPTCCD, Sri Lanka presented her presentation on “Efforts of NTP Sri Lanka in diagnosis & Treatment including Epidemiology, Challenges & Special Initiatives of Child Hood TB and “Pediatric TB within NTP”.

Dr. Binod Lal Bajracharya, President, Nepal Pediatric Society (NEPAS) presented “Challenges of Childhood TB in SAARC Region”.

Dr. Ganesh Kumar Shrestha, Consultant Pediatrician from Kanti Children Hospital, Kathmandu, presented “Diagnosis of TB in Pediatric” as Regional Resource Person.

Dr. Kala Somasundaram and Dr. Anuradha, Senior Registrar in Pediatric Pulmonology, presented “History Taking in Pediatric TB” “Community Participants in Childhood TB” and “Counseling in Childhood TB”.

Dr. Niranjana Dissanayake, Consultant Respiratory Physician on “Management of DR TB in Pediatrics” and “Prevention of Pediatric TB”.

Dr. Saumya Liyanage, Lecturer, Dept. of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Ragama presented her presentation on “Pathology and Pathogenesis of Pediatric TB” as Guest Lecturer.

Dr. Dhammika Vidangama, Microbiologist, NTRL, Welisara presented her presentation on “Laboratory Aspects of Pediatric TB” as Guest Lecturer.

Dr. Chathurika Munasinghe, Consultant Radiologist, LRH, Colombo presented her presentation on “Radiography of Childhood TB”.

A field visit at Colombo Chest Clinic and Medical Officer for Health (MOH), Nugagoda was conducted.

Group discussion for field report preparation and presentations was conducted.

4.6 Closing Ceremony

Hon’ble Minister Dr. Rajitha Senarathne, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Government of Sri Lanka graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director, NPTCCD, Government of Sri Lanka delivered the welcome speech in honor of the Hon’ble Minister, guests and participants. She presented a brief report on

this five-day SAARC ToT on childhood TB at the presence of Hon'ble Minister, Director General of Health Services and other dignitaries of Government of Sri Lanka.

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC delivered closing remarks and propounded his gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for the concurrence to organize the training programme in very appropriate time. Prof. Bichha explained the need of the ToT on childhood TB which was very important aspect of National TB Control Programme in the SAARC Member States. He expressed his gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister for his gracious presence in the programme.

Dr. Jayasundara Bandara, Director General, DGHS, Government of Sri Lanka attended as Chairperson of the closing ceremony. Dr. Bandara, highlighted the progress made by the SAARC Member States in TB and HIV/AIDS. He also explained about the status of childhood TB in the SAARC Region as well as in Sri Lanka.

Hon'ble Minister Dr. Rajitha Senaratne delivered his remarks and shown his satisfaction on the programme organized on the important subject of the National TB control programme. He thanked all for their efforts to control TB in the SAARC Member States. He expressed the commitment of the Government of Sri Lanka to support SAARC activities. Dr. Refai Cadare, Deputy Director, NPTCCD, delivered Vote of Thanks.

4.7. Outcome of the Training

The participants shared their experiences and information acquired in their work place. Participants also got chances of discussion with the experts regarding their doubts, challenges faced and the programme related to the childhood TB. So, it is obvious that participants acquainted with the real problems of childhood TB. They also familiarized in the management of cases of pediatric TB and updated their knowledge regarding the matter. They updated their skills to provide the health care delivery especially to the children with TB, TB/HIV as well as DR-TB.

**5. SAARC Regional Training on Management Information for Action (MIFA) for Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes
01-05 September 2017, New Delhi, India**



5.1 Introduction

This training will strengthen the interface between data management and TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes management to increase the knowledge, skills and motivation of TB and HIV/AIDS managers in order to make them capable of transforming routinely collected data into information useful for making appropriate decisions to improve programme management. Evidence-based public health practice can be said to follow five elements: setting priorities, developing management guidelines, measuring programme performance, improving programme performance, and resetting priorities based on an analysis of how performance might be improved. Setting priorities, developing management guidelines and resetting priorities based on performance information are usually addressed by the central units of the respective national programmes. The measurement and improvement of performance at the peripheral level generally remains weak, especially where the peripheral staff lacks the skills and attitude for evidence-based programme management. To strengthen the peripheral level, it is necessary to increase capacity to collect, analyze, interpret and use programme performance data.

The application of epidemiological concepts seems extremely relevant today in our region, considering that the SAARC region carries a heavy burden of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. As an essential tool for evidence-based programme management, epidemiology and its application is considered to be crucial for National TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes development and management. The formulation and implementation of a national policy and strategy is contingent upon the generation of an evidence-base for advocacy, programme planning, implementation and evaluation at all levels of health care. At present, this capacity is lacking in SAARC Member States and requires strengthening urgently, so that data can be generated at district and field levels and used for public health action at the local level. Instilling such an analytical approach at the district level and linkage with the next levels of health care is among the top-most priorities.

Transforming data into information that could lead to effective, efficient, timely and equitable decision-making, programme implementation and supportive supervision is very important in successful TB and HIV/AIDS control programme.

The SAARC region, with an estimated annual incidence of 3.8 million TB cases equivalent to 220 cases per 100 000 population which carries 36% of the global burden of TB incidence, of which 2.2 million (58%) were among men and 1.3 million (34%) among women and 0.35 million (9%) among children in year 2015. Three of the eight Member Countries in the Region are among the 30 high TB/MDR-TB burden countries, with India accounting for 27 % of the world's TB cases. In 2015, there were an estimated 100573 new cases of multidrug-resistant TB (RR-TB) and an additional 342248 notified tested for rifampicin-resistance TB (RR-TB). In 2015, 2.3 million new TB cases were notified and an estimated 0.6 million TB deaths. However the treatment success rate for new smear positive cases was 79% in year 2015.

The programme managers working at the central level in countries of the SAARC Region have access to more accurate surveillance data; recognize better patterns in programme outcomes; be able to list and differentiate the main causal factors and determine the fraction of the disease attributable to them; propose adequate recommendations; take effective actions and determine their impact on the disease burden. The programme managers at the district level have a better understanding and appreciation of how to analyze, interpret and use quantitative information for solving problems. Programme managers at the district and central level developed a sense of the reality and limitations of the context in which the data have been gathered and of their potential

usefulness. They acquired an increased capacity to adjust the programme implementation to the operational challenges, the epidemiological characteristics of the concerned health problem and the dynamics of the covered population. They also felt more involved in programme management, as they had have a greater capacity to recognize eventual problem areas and their potential solutions so they may take appropriate actions and judge their feasibility. The improved interface between supervisors and staff being supervised at the operational level will strengthen the decision-making capacity of the programme managers and improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the programme as a whole.

By recognizing the importance of the improving the knowledge and skills of the Programme Managers at various kind of Data Management on TB and HIV/AIDS., the 26th Meeting of the Governing Board of the STAC recommended the “Management Information for Action (MIFA) for Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes to be conducted in India.

Accordingly, a five day programme on “Management Information for Action (MIFA) for Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes 01-05 September 2017, India" jointly organized by SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS centre, Kathmandu, Nepal in collaboration with the RNTCP, Government of India held at National Tuberculosis Institute, Bengaluru, India.

5.2 Objectives:

1. To provide knowledge and skills on management information for action with focus on TB and HIV/AIDS control programs
2. To strengthen the skills of participants in data entry and analysis using analytical Software Programmes.
3. To assist Member States in review of their TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes
4. Methodology:
 1. Delivering lectures
 2. Power point presentations
 3. Lecture notes/ Handouts
 4. Interactive Participation
 5. Group work

5.3 Participants:

Twelve participants from National TB Control Programmes (NTP) & National AIDS Control Programmes (NACP) from SAARC Member States attended the training. The list of the participants and Resource Persons is placed at (Annexure 5)

5.4 Inaugural Session:

The Director of STAC and NTI welcomed to each other. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC graced the occasion as Chairperson. The programme was inaugurated by lighting the traditional lamp jointly by Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI, Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC, and Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC.

Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI distributed flowers to STAC officials and Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC distributed Khada to the dignitaries and resource person. Also Mr. Sanjeeb Kumar Jha, Statistician distributed flowers to the participants of Member states.

Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI, India, delivered the welcome address. He mentioned the collaboration between STAC and NTI has been conducting many regionally relevant programmes. He assured fullest cooperation from the Government of India and his support for future STAC activities.

Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC delivered the inaugural address. He highlighted about the importance of MIFA training and reliability of data. He also highlighted the activities of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre.

Dr, Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC delivered the Vote of Thanks.

5.5 Technical sessions

Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director of the STAC, Kathmandu, Nepal welcomed the participants for the technical sessions. Participants, Organizers, resource persons and facilitators introduced themselves to the gathering by giving a brief account of self. He has highlighted about the introduction of STAC

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist STAC presented Objective and Methodology and expected outcome of the training.

Dr. S. Uma Shankar, Chief Medical Officer, resource person for the training presented Health Management Information System. A copy of the presentation enclosed (**Annexure IV**).

First day training was conducted by introduction to data management (SPSS) using SPSS-23 version by Mr. R. Jitendra, NTI, India and also he highlighted the Nikshay programme to the participants. This session was facilitated by resource person from NTI and STAC.

Day 2: 02 September 2017

The Technical session of day 2 started with summarizing the previous day work by a participant followed by the introduction of Epidemiology as per schedule by Dr. S. Uma Shankar, Chief Medical Officer, NTI, India. In which Basic Bio-statistic-I was discussed by Mr. Sanjeeb Kumar Jha, Statistician, STAC (**Annex-V**). In the afternoon session, Descriptive Epidemiology, causality and Basic Biostatistics -II was facilitated by Dr. V.K. Chadha, Head, Epidemiology & Research, NTI, India. Presentation is placed at (**Annex- VI**)

Day 3: 03rd September 2017

As per the previous practice technical sessions was commenced with summarizing previous days. Thereafter, Mr. R. Jitendra demonstrated the important aspects of data entry and data modifying using hypothetical questionnaire. Each participant were provided Lap top computer for doing practice. Then participants had practical session on SPSS on Data Analysis and Data distribution and cross tabulation. Practical course was conducted whole day. Third day training was conducted using SPSS -23 versions by Dr. R. Jitendra, Following topics were covered during this session.

- Opening SPSS data File
- The Help system
- Collapsing and Deleting Viewer Items
- Data Organization in SPSS
- Designing a Coding Scheme
- Choice of Entering Data

This session was also facilitated by resource person from NTI and STAC.

At the end of the session, there was discussion on “Epidemiological of TB, global trend and country situation, case finding, case holding and TB notification” by Dr. V. K. Chadha, NTI, India.

Day 4: 04th September 2017

The Technical session of day 4 started with summarizing the previous day work by a participant. Fourth day training was conducted using SPSS -23 versions by Mr. R. Jitendra, Following topics were covered during this session.

- Bivariate analysis with discrete variables (Practical course)
- Practice on Data Analysis (SPSS)

This session was also facilitated by resource person from NTI and STAC.

Day 5: 05th September 2017

Recap of previous day sessions followed by the using data for analysis was conducted by Mr. R. Jitendra. Participants had presented status of TB and HIV/AIDS in their respective country. During this session were facilitated by resource persons from NTI and STAC.

5.6 Closing session

The closing session was attended by Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI, Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC, Dr. P. Kumar delivered remarks and thanked all participants and organizers for the success of the program. He acknowledged the efforts made by STAC for prevention and control TB and HIV/AIDS in the region.

Resource persons of the programme Dr. V. K. chadha, Head, Epidemiology & Research, NTI, India gave his remarks and appreciated for excellent arrangement of the training by STAC and Government of India.

Dr. R.P.Bichha, Director, STAC, Nepal delivered his closing remarks. He extended thanks to Resource Persons and participants from National TB Control Programme (NTP) and National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) and all supporting staff for their hard work to make the training successful. Dr. Bichha also highlighted the importance of this training. He expressed

gratitude on behalf of STAC to the Government of India, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National TB Control programme & National AIDS Control Programme.

On behalf of the participants Dr. Dr. Ahmadul Hasan Khan, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert, National TB Control Programme, Directorate General of Health Services, TB Gate, Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh thanked the organizers, Resource Persons and STAC for organizing the valuable training and highlighted the benefit that they obtained from this training.

All the participants and Resource Persons were awarded certificates for their participation in the five days training. The certificate was provided jointly by Director, STAC, Director NTI, India.

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC presented the vote of thanks.

5.7 Conclusion

Participants were successfully trained for application of computer soft ware to their day today programme activities to prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS.

6. SAARC Exposure visit to observe the best practices on HIV/AIDS in Nepal 11-15 September 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal



6.1 Introduction

In compliance with the decision, the Twenty-sixth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) 11-12 January, 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal, the SAARC Exposure visit to observe the best practices was held in Nepal on 11-15 September, 2017. The Participants from Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri-Lanka participated in the visit. The visit was confirmed by all countries except Maldives.

6.2 INAUGURAL SESSION

The inaugural ceremony was chaired by Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur at STAC.

Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC extended a warm welcome to all the delegates from the SAARC Member States for participating in the Exposure visit to observe the best practices on HIV/AIDS in Nepal. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health, SAARC Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency, SAARC Secretary General and Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat, for their invaluable support to organize this programme. He also expressed his special thanks to Dr. Tarun Poudel Director, National HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Nepal for his cordial support to organize this programme. He wished all the success of the programme.

Following welcome address, Dr. A. P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist made a presentation on introduction along with mandates, vision and mission of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre and HIV/AIDS situation in the SAARC Region. He shedlight about the STAC and highlighted the situation of HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region. In the mean time Dr. R. P. Bichha highlighting the importance of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador's programme to create public awareness in the

region. He also emphasized that four and half years Ms. Shabana Azmi programme was marvelous impact in the region.

Following presentation, Dr. Runa Jha, Director, National Public Health Laboratory, Teku, Kathmandu gave her remarks in this opening of the programme. She highlighted that there is big challenges to reach 90-90-90 targets in 2020 in Nepal. She emphasized that the all SAARC Member States should work hard to ending HIV epidemic in 2030.

5.3 Participants:

Twelve participants from National TB Control Programmes (NTP) & National AIDS Control Programmes (NACP) from SAARC Member States attended the training. The list of the participants and Resource Persons is placed at **Annexure 6**.

5.4 COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS ON SITUATION OF HIV/AIDS AND BEST PRACTICES

Country presentations-Afghanistan

Dr. Mujiburhman Sameer Rasakh, HIV/ and AIDS Provincial Coordinator, National AIDS Control Programme, Kabul presented on Overview of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Afghanistan. He highlighted some empirical achievements on development and approval of Harm Reduction made by the Centre and associated challenges in fulfilling its mandates. The detailed presentation is at **ANNEX - III**.

Country presentations-Bangladesh

Dr. Mohammad Rashedul Hassan, Deputy Programme Manager from AIDS and STD Programme, Dhaka, Government of Bangladesh presented on HIV/AIDS Situation & Best Practice in Bangladesh.

Country presentations-Nepal:

Dr. Rajya Shree Nyachhyo Kunwar, HIV Technical Specialist, National Centre for STD and AIDS Control, Nepal presented the paper on HIV Response in Nepal. She highlighted the **90-90-90**: target an ambitious treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic. She also briefed about service package and challenges faced by the Programme.

Country presentations -Sri-Lanka:

Dr. Ahamed Ismail Ahamed Ziyad, Medical Officer, National STD/AIDS Control programme (NSACP) Government of Sri-Lanka made presentation on HIV/AIDS Situation in Sri-Lanka. He highlighted the achievement of National HIV/AIDS Programme and progress in HIV/AIDS Control.

Vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. A. P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC. The inaugural session was concluded with Group Photo.

5.5. Field Visit – National AIDS Control Programme

a. On 11th September 2017 visited National Centre for AIDS and STD Control Programme

After Lunch, the team visited National Centre for AIDS and STD Control Programme at 2.30 pm on 11 Sep. 2017. Following officials were attended in the Meeting from NCASC

1. Rajesh Khanal
Project Manager
NCASC/Global Fund Programme
2. Mr. Keshab Deuba,
SI Specialist
NCASC/Global Fund Programme
3. Shiva Hari Adhikair
Communication and Documentation Officer
NCASC/Global Fund Programme
4. Dr. Satehit Neupane
Supply Chair Management Coordinator
NCASC/Global Fund Programme

Dr. Rajya Shree Nyachhyo Kunwor, HIV Technical Specialist, National Centre for STD and AIDS Control, Nepal extended a warm welcome to all delegates in the NCASC on behalf of Dr. Tarun Paudel, Director of NCASC. Mr. Keshab Deuba, SI Specialist made a presentation on Integrated Biological and Behavior Surveillance (IBBS) surveys among key population in Nepal. He mentioned that the first case of HIV infection in Nepal was identified in 1988, Nepal has made significant achievement in reduction of new HIV infection cases from 7,512 annually in 2,000 to 1,331 in 2015, despite of high HIV prevalence among certain population groups such as people who inject drugs and male and transgender sex workers. This achievement so far in terms of reduction in HIV prevalence and new HIV infection is the result of collaborative efforts of national government entities, external development partners , non-governmental organizations , civil society organization and communities of key affected populations .

She highlighted that the Nepal is the first Country to implement harm reduction programme to Injecting Drug Users in South Asia. Intervention programme in Nepal is well organized, HIV prevalence in Nepal was 68% in 2002, the percentage is reduced to 6.8 in 2016. He also informed that Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) screening test is Mandatory for TB positive patients, pregnancy women and before surgery in Nepal. Following the presentation interaction programme was held among the participants and officials from NCASC.

b. 2nd Day- (12th September 2017) visited National Public Health laboratory, Teku ,Kathmandu

On this day participants and STAC officials visited National Public Health Laboratory, Teku ,Kathmandu. Mr. Subash Dhital Microbiologist of NPHL and his team welcomed to the delegates and officials of STAC. He briefed about the performed activities of Reference HIV/AIDS Laboratory of Nepal like HIVPCR (viral load), EID (Early Infant Diagnosis), CD4 count, HBsAg Viral Load, HCV Viral Load, HIV Western blot, and external quality assurance Programme etc.

He also informed that the procurement process of the laboratory material, sample collection, sample transportation, laboratory hazards and staff strengthen of the NPHL in HIV Reference Laboratory.

Mr. Dhital also explained that NPHL (HIV reference laboratory) is scale up Viral load service in 2014 and the future plan of NPHL. Following the presentation participants were observed the facilities in NPHL. Dr. Mujiburhman Sameer Rasakh, HIV and AIDS Provincial Coordinator from National AIDS Control Programme, Afghanistan informed that Afghanistan does not have facilities to test HIV using PCR method in infants and requested STAC and National Centre for AIDS and STD Control Programme Nepal for facilitate this test for 20 HIV/AIDS children under 18 months.

After visiting NPHL, all the participants and officials visited Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, Teku, Kathmandu.

Dr. Ramesh Pokheral, Director of the Hospital welcomed the SAARC delegates and officials of STAC. He briefed the activities carried out by the Hospital and participants observed the facilities provided by the hospital to the People living with HIV/AIDS.

c. On 12th September 2017 at 3.30 pm visited Sparsh Nepal.

Officials of Sparsh Nepal welcomed the SAARC delegates and STAC officials. Mr. Prabachan K. C. made a briefed presentation about Sparsh and its activities in Nepal. He mentioned that Sparsh started its journey in 2002 as a group support and registered as a NGO in 2004. The Sparsh started to work with people living with HIV (PLHIV) and their children and families in particular and key population i.e. People Who Inject Drugs (PWID), Female Injecting Drug Users (FIDU), MSM, FSW and clients of FSW in general. He also explained services given by to this people to reduce HIV burdening in Nepal. During his presentation he mentioned that challenges faced by them during the implementation of the programme.

d. 3rd Day – 13th September 2017 visited Dhulikhel Community Hospital, Dhulikhel, Kavreplanchok District, Nepal

Dr. Ram Kumar Makaju Chief of the Hospital welcomed to the SAARC delegates and STAC Officials. Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC highlighted the objective of exposure visit, role of STAC in controlling HIV/AIDS in the region.

Dr Rajendra Tamrakar, ART Physician made a presentation about HIV/AIDS scenario in Nepal and its services/treatment, activities provided by Dhulikhel Hospital. He shedlighted that Dhulikhel Hospital is providing service free of charge Patients Living with HIV since 2010, Isoniazid Preventive Therapy (IPT) started since 2016 and PMTCT since 2012.

3rd Day – 13th September 2017 visited Bhaktapur Hospital, Bhaktapur District, Nepal

Dr. Sudha Devkota, Chief of the hospital welcomed SAARC delegates and STAC officials. Mis Shristi Aryal ART counselor of this hospital presented the activities of ART, Regimen of ART and services provided by the centre. She mentioned that all the service are free of cost for PLHIV patients. She also briefed that the ART Center started in this hospital since 2013.

e. On 14th September 2017 visited Youth Vision Nepal, Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Mr. Jagadish Lohani, Director of this organization and his team welcomed SAARC delegates and officials of STAC. Mr. Lohani made a presentation on youth vision service frame. During his presentation, Mr. Lohani mentioned that the vision, mission, goal and objectives of the centre and services provided by the centre to Intervention drug addicts.

He also mentioned the how OST programme is useful for the drug addicts and to reduce the HIV/AIDS situation in Nepal.

5.6 Courtesy call visit to the H. E. the Secretary General – SAARC on 14th Sep. 2017

All Participants and STAC officials were in the courtesy call visit with the H. E. the Secretary General – SAARC along with, Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director (SA) and Mr. Manzoor Riaz, Desk Officer at SAARC Secretariat. H. E. the Secretary General – SAARC welcomed all the delegates to the SAARC Secretariat.

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon summarized about the programme.

H. E. the Secretary General – SAARC briefed about the SAARC Secretariat its establishment, functions and staff strength etc. H. E. also informed about the quorum system for SAARC activities and appreciated that all most all activities completed successfully by the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre in 2017 in spite of big challenges to fulfill the quorum.

Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director (SA) also gave remarks on this visit. She also appreciated the activities done by the STAC.

Dr. Rashedul Rasheed participant from Bangladesh made a request to H. E. for the technical support in controlling of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh. Dr. Mujibulrahman expressed his happiness by observing best practices on HIV/AIDS in Nepal. Following discussion all the participants observed the facilities available at SAARC Secretariat.

5.7 CLOSING CEREMONY:

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC was chaired the closing ceremony. He welcomed to all the participants for the closing ceremony at Hotel Annapurna on 15th Sep. 2017.

On behalf of participants Dr. Mujibulrhman Sameer Rasakh, HIV/ and AIDS Provincial Coordinator, National AIDS Control Programme, Afghanistan; Dr. Mohammad Rashedul Hassan, Deputy Programme Manager, AIDS/STD Programme, Bangladesh and Dr. Ahamed Ismail Ahamed Ziyad, Medical Officer, National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP), Sri-Lanka gave their remarks. All of them highly appreciated the programme was organizing in Nepal and extended their gratitude to STAC and NACP, Nepal. **Participant felt the important of this programme and STAC should be organized such experience sharing programmes in future also.**

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC presented mementos to all participants of programme.

Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon gave his closing remarks. He summarized the activities carried out and places visited these five days. He also mentioned to reach 90-90-90 target in 2020. On his closing remarks, he extended his gratitude to His Excellency the Secretary General- SAARC and Director (Social Affairs), SAARC Secretariat, Director, NCASC, Government of Nepal and all the member states. He also thanked to all the participants for their active participation. During his remarks, he mentioned to reach ending HIV epidemic from the world. SAARC Member States has to work together and STAC will provide every support to the member states.

Vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Meena Kumari Dhakal, Programme Coordinator, STAC. She expressed her sincere thanks to all the SAARC delegates from the SAARC Member States for the successful completion of the visit. She also thanked to the Director, National Centre for AIDS and STD control for their excellent cooperation and good coordination for organizing this visit in different HIV related Centre centre in Nepal. She extended her heartfelt thanks to the officials of SAARC Secretariat for kind cooperation for organizing the programme successfully. She also thanked the Hotel Annapurna for the nice arrangement.

Commemoration of World TB Day 2017

7. World TB Day & SAARC TB Day

Introduction

The theme of World TB Day & SAARC TB Day of this year was “**Unite to End TB - Leave no one behind**” which aims to address social and other barriers by eliciting a strong, systemic response to end the TB epidemic, drawing on the opportunities provided by the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, especially those goals aimed at achieving universal health coverage and social protection from disease.

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) and its partners are committed that the **Region free of TB**. STAC is one of the Regional Centres of SAARC working for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the region with an objective to coordinate the efforts of the National TB Control Programmes (NTPs) and National AIDS Control Programmes (NACPs) of SAARC Member States.

Considering the situation of the problem of TB, the Centre organized Advocacy and Awareness Activities to generate the knowledge on TB, specially its prevention and control strategy on the occasion of World TB Day/SAARC TB Day of this year which are as under:

7.1. Activities:

7.2. Publication of Message of H. E. Secretary General, SAARC

Message issued by His Excellency Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General, SAARC was published on Centre’s website and circulated to the National TB Control Programmes (NTPs) of SAARC Member States for publication on National daily Newspapers on the occasion of World TB Day 2017.

The global theme of the day was “**Unite to End TB - Leave no one behind**”



7.3. Interaction Programme with Nursing Students and Media on Tuberculosis and its Preventive Strategy, 22nd March, 2017, STAC, Thimi



Introduction

STAC commemorated the day by **organizing “Interaction Programme with Nursing Students and Media on Tuberculosis and its Preventive Strategy”** keeping in view the significance of involvement of nursing students and media in the fight against TB campaign in the country. It was a one day programme organized by STAC at Thimi, Bhaktapur on 22nd March, 2017.

The Objectives of the programme were

- To create awareness among the nursing students & media people
- To reduce the burden of disease by spreading awareness against Tuberculosis
- To mobilize political and social commitment to curtail the TB cases by reaching the unreached

Participation

Forty nursing students from Chakrabarti Habi Educational Academy, School of Health Science Bhaktapur, Nepal including faculty teachers participated in the programme. Dignitaries from Ministry of Health, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal, dignitaries from SAARC Secretariat, UNAIDS, and experts from WHO/NTP Nepal participated in the programme. Staff from National TB Centre (NTP, Nepal) and National Centre for AIDS and STC Control (NCASC, Nepal) also attended the programme.

Proceeding of the Programme

To enhance the community involvement & active participation of the people in TB control, STAC has developed its strategy to initiate partnerships with different stakeholders by organizing interaction programmes on the special occasions of World TB Day, World AIDS Day and SAARC Charter Day every year.

Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC delivered welcome address and presented a paper on **“Introduction, function and objectives of STAC”**. He highlighted the regional situation of TB and efforts of STAC towards prevention and control of TB in the Region.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad Pant, Director General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal graced the programme as Chief Guest. Mr. Sangya Rinchen, Officer In-charge from SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu attended as Special Guest. Dr. D. S. Bam, former Secretary, Ministry of Health, Government of Nepal as well as former Director, STAC/NTP, Nepal attended the programme as Guest of Honour.

STAC honoured Dr. Dirgh Singh Bam former Secretary of Health with Woolen-shawl and Khada (a traditional ceremonial scarf). Dr. Rajendra Prasad Pant, Director General Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal also the Chief Guest felicitated Dr. Bam



Felicitations to Dr. Dirgh Singh Bam, former Director, STAC

on behalf of STAC for his outstanding contribution in TB Control Programme in Nepal as well as in SAARC region. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC conferred the Letter of Appreciation to Dr. D. S. Bam.

Dr. Tarun Poudel, Director, National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Kathmandu gave his remarks.

Dr. G. D. Thakur, former Director of Epidemiology Division, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal spoke on the current challenges of TB and HIV/AIDS Control in Nepal. Dr. D. S. Bam appreciated the present activities of STAC. He advised the National TB Control Programme to reach unreached population. He expressed his grateful for continuing the TB control activities and its sustainability in the country and in the Region.

Dr. Subash Lakhe, National Professional Officer, communicable diseases at the WHO expressed his commitment to support STAC in its activities.

Dr. Ruben Fidel Prado, UNAIDS, Country Director, Nepal spoke on the issues and topics on the TB control Programme at the global level. He also highlighted the global challenges, achievements and efforts for stopping the tuberculosis.

Mr. Sangye Rinchhen, Officer In-charge, SAARC Secretariat highlighted the vision and objectives of the SAARC. He thanked to the Government of Nepal for rendering valuable support to SAARC & SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre. He extended sincere thanks for the success of TB Control in Nepal as well as SAARC and in World as a whole.

On this occasion, the Chief Guest, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Pant released two publications, SAARC Regional Programme Guidelines of Diagnosis & Management of Pediatric Tuberculosis-2017 and SAARC Journal of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS.



In his remarks, Dr. Pant highlighted the programmatic management of tuberculosis and briefed the entire problems faced by the developing country like Nepal. He also highlighted the importance of STAC at the SAARC region for coordination between member states in TB and HIV/AIDS programmes.

Dr. R. P Bichha, Director, delivered the closing remarks and explained the rationale of the theme of the World TB Day of this year “**Unite to End TB Leave no one behind** “. He also highlighted the main purpose of the commemoration of World TB Day. Since, the TB Control is only possible, when the entire stakeholders joined their solidarity for this noble cause. He also highlighted the recently released STAC publications. He then spoke on the rationale of SAARC Pediatric Guidelines. He extended thanks to the Chief Guest for his gracious presence. He also extended thanks to all the dignitaries spared their valuable time for this programme and declared the session closed. The opening session was followed by group photo and technical session.

Technical Session

Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC highlighted the general information of tuberculosis, its symptoms, mode of transmission and its preventive strategy. He explained that the one sputum positive TB patient can transmit the disease to 10-15 people in a year. He also presented the SAARC Regional burden of TB along with the vital role of advocacy, communication and social mobilization in TB control. He also pointed out the key role of nursing students in controlling tuberculosis.

Dr. Ashish Shrestha, WHO/NTP Nepal spoke about TB in the global scenario. He mentioned the efforts of the WHO at the global level for controlling this disease.

Ms. Kopila Karki coordinator at the Chakrabarti Habi Education Academy College of Health Science spoke on the role of nursing students and college. She also appreciated the programme and thanked to the organizer for giving opportunity to participate in such important event.

Dr. D. S. Bam, former secretary for health and Director of STAC shared his past experiences during the implementation of DOTS in Nepal.

Dr. R. P Bichha, awarded the appreciation letter to the participating college followed by delivering the closing remarks.

The programme was presided over by Dr. R. P Bichha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre.

Outcomes

- Participants were made aware of about different issues in relation to TB and its control strategy in Nepal as well in SAARC.
- Students and Teachers shown their commitment to support for TB control programme.

8. Participation on National event on World TB Day- 2017

On Friday, 24th March 2017, National TB Control Programme (NTP), Nepal in collaboration with its different partners organized a National function at National TB Centre, Thimi Bhaktapur. Dr. Senendra Raj Upreti, Secretary, Ministry of Health graced the occasion as Chief



Guest. The programme was chaired by Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, National TB Centre.

Dr. Mohan Kumar Prasai, Sr. Consultant Chest Physician, National TB Centre, delivered welcome speech. He also highlighted the efforts of NTP Nepal for control of TB.

The Chief Guest inaugurated the programme by lighting the traditional lamp and letting the bunch of balloons carrying different TB control messages.

The chief guest also awarded the appreciation letter to Mr. Jog Bdr. Gurung for his remarkable contribution in TB control in Nawalparasi district of Nepal. Mr. Gurung has been involving as a volunteer in TB treatment centre since 20 years.

Mr. Bijaya Rajthala, MDR TB patients shared his experiences as patient. He explained the challenges he faced during the treatment.

Mr. Devendra Bdr Pradhan, President of Nepal Anti TB Association, Kalimati shed light on the activities of NATA and their contribution in TB control.

Dr. R. P Bichha, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre presented “Introduction & Achievements of STAC”. He also quoted the His Excellency, Secretary General’s, special Message released on the occasion of World TB Day 2017.

Dr. Jos Vandelaer, WHO representative to Nepal shed light on the global scenario of TB control programme.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad Pant, Director General, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal appreciated the functions and achievements of NTP, Nepal. He advised that we need to accelerate the activities to meet the goals set by End TB Strategy. Still there are numbers of challenges, for that the collective efforts can only fight against all these challenges such as poverty, TB HIV co-infection, MDR TB etc.

Dr. Senendra Raj Upreti, Secretary for Health appreciated the activities of National TB Centre. He highlighted the challenges faced by Government of Nepal to combat this disease. Dr. G. D Thakur Ministry of Health spoke on the various aspects of TB control strategy. Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, NTC and Chairperson delivered closing remarks.

The programme was attended by the representative of Government officials, STAC, NATA, USAID, WHO, UNAIDS, HERD and large number of people from I/NGOs and journalists from different media.

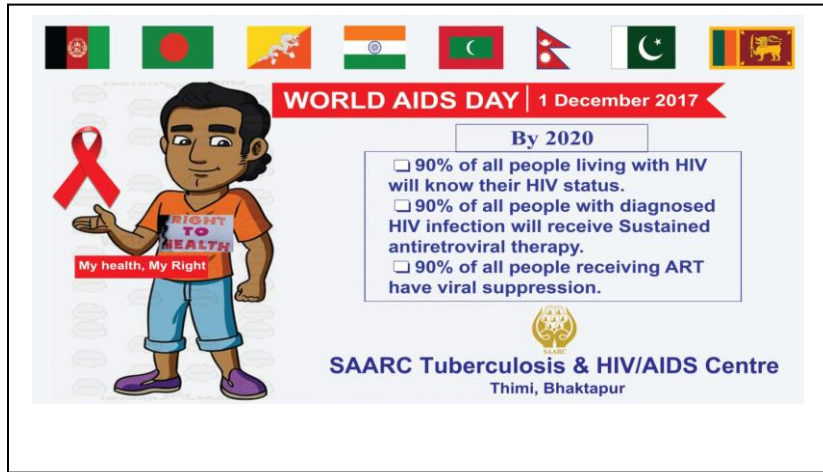
- **Displaying of Flexes , Banners and Hoarding Board**



- **Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2017**

Theme: My health: My right

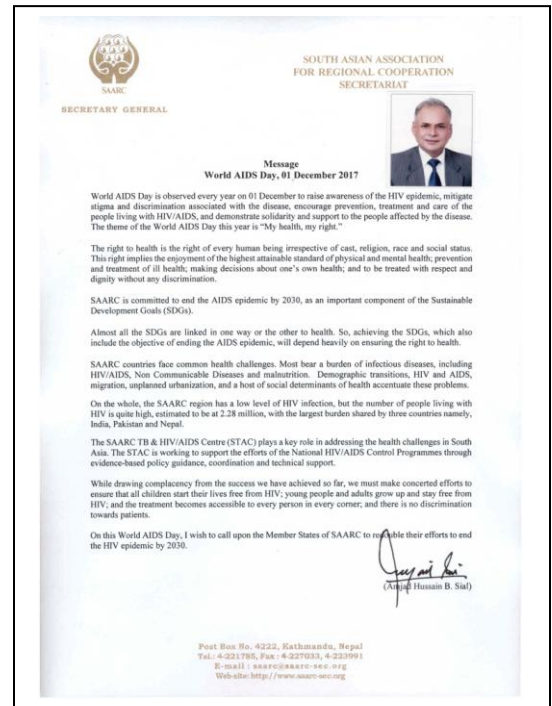
World AIDS Day, designated on 1 December every year since 1988 is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection, and mourning those who have died of the disease. Government and health officials, non-governmental organizations and individuals



around the world observe the day, often with education on AIDS prevention and control.

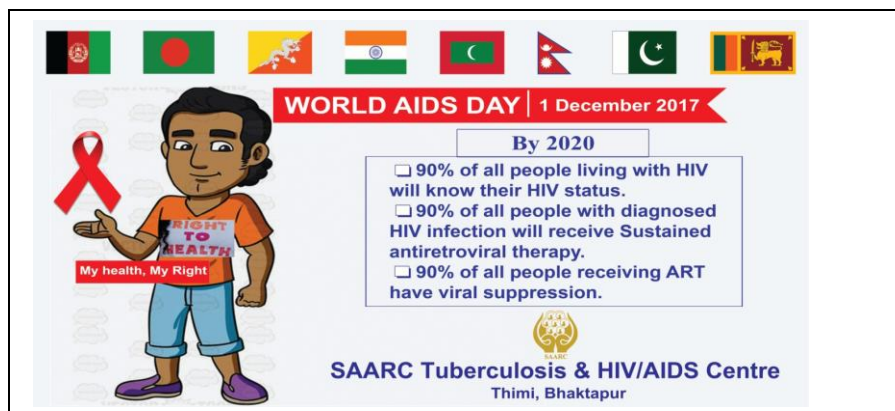
9.1. Message of His Excellency

A message of His Excellency Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General, SAARC was released by SAARC Secretariat and received a copy in STAC, which was disseminated to the SAARC Member States for publishing in local media and also uploaded on STAC website on 1st December 2017.



Display of Hoarding Board

STAC displayed a Hoarding Board with awareness messages in Centre's premises, which can observe by the people who visit STAC.



10. Celebration of 33rd SAARC Charter Day

Introduction:

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu celebrated 33rd Anniversary in Kathmandu on 8th December 2017 by organising a Interaction programme on SAARC, TB and HIV/AIDS and their control and prevention strategy with modern concept.

Dr. R. P Bichha, Director STAC Chaired the session.

The Objectives of the programme were:

- ◆ To enhance the awareness on SAARC and its important in the region
- ◆ To sensitize the participants about important aspects of TB, HIV/AIDS among nursing students.
- ◆ To emphasize the importance of community participation in prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the region.
- ◆ To stress the role of teachers and nursing students as change agents in prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS to make a TB and HIV/AIDS free region.

Participation

Over 80 nursing students along with the concerned teachers participated in the programme.

Proceedings of the programme

Interaction Programme with Teachers and Nursing Students on SAARC, STAC & TB and HIV/AIDS

The 33rd SAARC Charter Day has been celebrated by organizing an Interaction Programme with Teachers and Nursing Students on SAARC, STAC & TB and HIV/AIDS from Shradha Institute of Health Science on 8th December 2017 in STAC. In the programme over 60 students of grade of PCL along with the Vice-Principal and concerned teachers participated.

General Objective:

- ◆ To enhance the awareness on SAARC and its important in the region
- ◆ To sensitize the participants about important aspects of TB, HIV/AIDS among nursing students.
- ◆ To emphasize the importance of community participation in prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the region.

- ◆ To stress the role of teachers and nursing students as change agents in prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS to make a TB and HIV/AIDS free region.

Participation

The 33rd SAARC Charter Day has been celebrated by organizing an Interaction Programme with Teachers and Nursing Students on SAARC, STAC & TB and HIV/AIDS from Shradha Institute of Health Science on 8th December 2017 in STAC. In the programme over 80 students of grade of PCL along with the Vice-Principal and concerned teachers participated.

Opening Session

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu celebrated 33rd Anniversary in Kathmandu on 8th December 2017 by organising a Interaction programme on SAARC, TB and HIV/AIDS and their control and prevention strategy with modern concept. Dr. R. P Bichha, Director STAC Chaired the session. Prof Dr. R. P Bichha, Director, STAC delivered welcome address and made a presentation on SAARC, STAC and its objectives, functions, vision, mission, goal and Role of Nursing College for the prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS. He stressed the vital role of nursing students in TB and HIV/AIDS. He also highlighted the ongoing activities of SAARC and STAC for the benefit of the people of South Asia.

Proceedings of the programme

Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC made a presentation on General information on sign, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment on HIV/AIDS. Dr. Ajith highlighted the risk groups of getting infection of HIV/AIDS and different ways of transmission.

Mr. Kailash Bdr. Karki, Training Officer, STAC presented a paper on General information on sign, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment on TB. He sensitized the participants the mode of transmission and ways of prevention. He also pointed out the role of nursing students in prevention of tuberculosis.

Mr. Bishnu Kunwar, Lab technician, STAC, Laboratory diagnosis of TB and HIV/AIDS

Mr. S. K. Jha, Statistician, STAC Presentation on statistical data and its role on TB and HIV/AIDS

Mr. Dependra Subba, Librarian, STAC made a presentation on brief introduction of Resource Centre of STAC

Ms. Bimala Khadka, Vice Principal made a remarks on behalf of College. She appreciated the programme organized by STAC and thanked for giving opportunity for inviting them in such important programme.

Prof Dr. R. P Bichha, Director, STAC facilitated to Mr. Gyanendra Lal Joshi , Former Accountant and Mr. Pradyumna Bhanadari, Former Computer Technician of STAC for their invaluable contribution in STAC as well as in TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes.

Director, STAC Awarded the appreciation letter to participating college & delivered closing remarks

Vote of thanks was delivered by M. K. Dhakal, SPA, STAC

Participants were provided publications of STAC as resource materials.

Celebration of SAARC Charter Day in New Delhi on 08 December, 2017

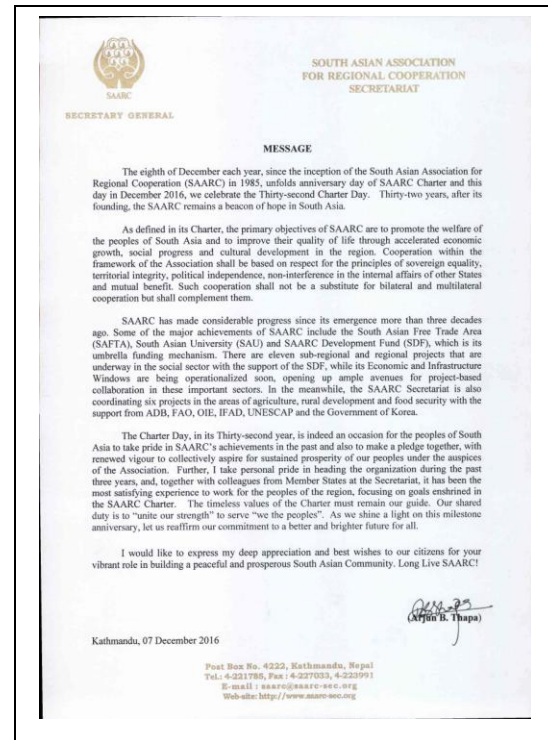
Conducted a separate session for Celebration of “33rd SAARC Charter Day in New Delhi with involvements of participants of SAARC Exposure Visit to observe the best practices on TB in India, 04-08 December, 2017. The participants from, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives spoke about the importance of SAARC. They also highlighted message issued by their heads or Government on the occasion of SAARC Charter Day. Mr. K.B. Basnet, Admin Officer, STAC on behalf of STAC read out the Message of H.E. Secretary-General, SAARC issued on the occasion of SAARC Charday-2017.

4.1. Message of His Excellency

A message of His Excellency Mr. Amjed Hussain B Sial, Secretary General, SAARC was released by SAARC Secretariat and received a copy in STAC, which was published on STAC website on 8th December 2017.

Outcome

The participating Nursing students/teachers became aware on TB and HIV/AIDS and its control mechanism and available services in the country. Simultaneously, they also gained knowledge on SAARC, its importance in the country for the all round development of the people of the Region as a whole.



7. Presentation and Dissemination of Research Findings on TB & HIV/AIDS through participation in International Conferences

- Participation in the 48th UNION World Conference on Lung Health

Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC participated in the 48th UNION World Conference organized in Mexico, **United Mexican States** from 11-14 October 2017. In the Conference most of the National Programme Managers of TB Control in SAARC Member States participated, congregated and utilize the opportunity to share their experiences and renewal their cooperation required for the control of TB in the Region.

ii. Participation in PPM Workshop, NTP Nepal

Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC participated in the Public-Private Mix (PPM) workshop in TB Control organized by NTP Nepal in different parts of central region of Nepal in October 2017. Dr. Bichha contributed in the workshop as a TB expert and main resource person. The workshop was conducted at Birgunj, Janakpur and Chitawan districts of Nepal.

9. Participation in the Review of Activities NTPs and NACPs in the SAARC Member States

Regional Review Meeting of Far-western Region, Nepal

Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC participated in the Annual Performance Review Meeting at the invitation of the Far Western Regional Health Directorate, Dipayal, Dhangadhi, Nepal held from 19th to 21st February, 2017. The objective of the participation was to support Member State to carry out the review of TB and HIV/AIDS programmes. STAC has regular programme to support Member States to review the NTP and NACP upon their request.

11. Fourteenth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Member States

SAARC TB Reference Laboratory (STRL) has a good networking for Quality Assurance of Sputum Microscopy with the Ten National TB Reference Laboratories (NRLs) of the Member States under NTP. STRL has been supporting NRLs in the area of Quality Assurance (QA) of microscopy network. Standardization of culture and Drug Susceptibility Testing (DST) and the implementation of international Bio-safety measures are the other challenges. STRL has successfully completed fourteenth round of proficiency testing in 2017. The result revealed that among the participating National TB Reference Laboratories from SAARC Member States there were *three minor errors* reported. No any QE showed.

12. Conferment of SAARC Award on HIV/AIDS 2017

The award was not conferred because of no-qualified applicants.

13. Publication and Distribution

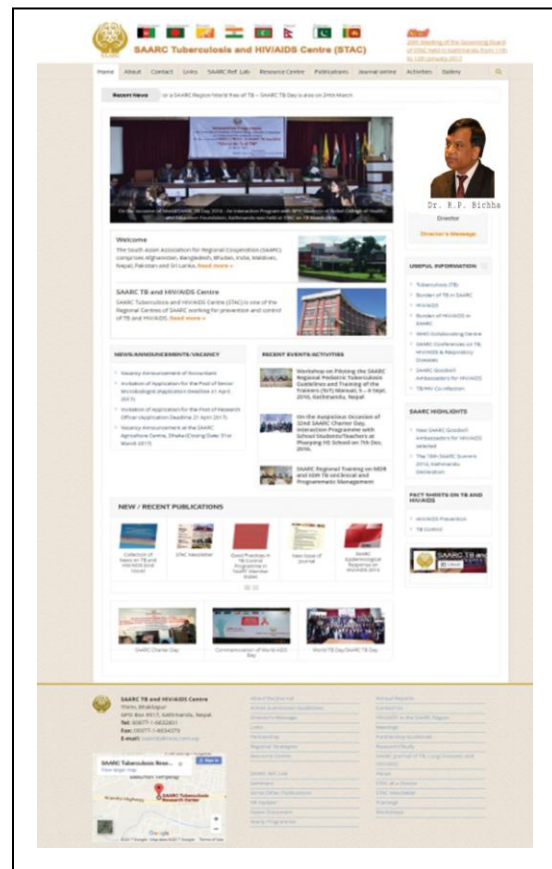
STAC publications contains reports on activities, updated information on TB and HIV/AIDS, articles related to TB, HIV/AIDS and Lung Diseases on new findings, case reports, awareness messages etc. news on TB and HIV/AIDS along with the information on related matters of the SAARC Member States of the concerned year. These publications are distributed to the SAARC Member States, experts and concerned international agencies, such as WHO, UNAIDS etc. through electronic circulation as well as by surface mail on the basis of their necessity. Almost all publications are uploaded on STAC website (www.saarctb.org) which can be downloaded freely for non commercial purpose.





14. Dissemination of Information on TB, HIV and AIDS by updating STAC Website (www.saarctb.org)

An official website of STAC is available in internet under the web address, of www.saarctb.org. On this website recent information about TB control, HIV prevention, information on programmatic management, informative articles, news & announcement of the Centre, support to other SAARC Regional Centres by publishing the information upon their request, uploaded publications of STAC etc. are being published. Periodically and timely updating for the purpose of giving updated information has been done. Timely modification is being done to make the website more users' friendly, compatible to almost all web browsers used in



internet browsing. A simple and user friendly online submission system of articles is being also managed.

15. Resource Centre for TB and HIV/AIDS (STAC Library)

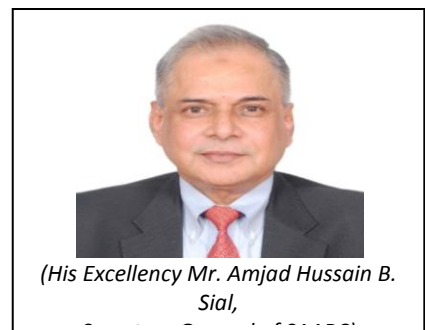
This is a specialized library for TB and HIV/AIDS. Available books, journals, newspapers, reports, dissertations, audio-visual materials related to TB and HIV/AIDS have been collected and computerized for the use of people. This library has linked all its e-resources on the STAC website www.saarctb.org.

16. Collection, Compilation and e-Circulation of Published Scientific Articles and Important News Related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the National Daily Newspapers/Journals

Important information related to the TB and HIV/AIDS published on different websites has been browsed and downloaded within the download parameter and compiled and placed on STAC website for the information to the website users.

Brief News

Appointment of the New Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)



His Excellency Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial has assumed charge of the office of Secretary General of SAARC from 01 March 2017 on completion of the tenure of former Secretary General.

H. E. Mr. Sial was born on 20 June 1956 and did M. Sc. Degree in Defense and Strategic Studies. He joined foreign service of Pakistan in 1983 and served at the Headquarters as Section Officer (1984-1987 & 1991-1993), Director (1993-1994 & 2000-2002) and Director General (2006-2009 & 2011), Additional Foreign Secretary (2014), and Special Secretary (2015-2016).

He has held various diplomatic assignments in Pakistan Missions abroad: Vienna (1987-1990), Harare (1994-1996) and New York (1996-2000).

He remained on deputation with SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu (2003-2006). He also served as Ambassador/Alternate Permanent Representative, at the Pakistan Permanent Mission to the UN, New York (2009-2011) and also served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Republic of Tajikistan (2011-2014). Presently, he is serving as Secretary General of SAARC with effect from 1st March 2017. He is from Pakistan and married. The STAC family wishes to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency and his family.

Appointment of New Director at STAC

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, M.B., B.S., M. D.

Dr. Bichha joined SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre in the post of Director on March 2, 2017. He did his Graduation (MBBS) from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India and completed Post Graduation in Paediatrics (M.D. Paediatrics) from the same institution in 1991.



(Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director,

He started his service as Paediatrician and Head of Department of Pediatrics in Koshi Zonal Hospital, a Governmental Hospital with 50 beds having separate paediatric department with Neonatal Care Unit and Nutritional Rehabilitation Center in 1992. He has very good experience of Child Health Division, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal where he worked as Director. He also worked as Director and Chief Neonatologist and Pulmonologist at Kanti Children Hospital for 6 years. Before joining STAC he was Director at Family Health Division, Department of Health Services, Government of Nepal.

He is a very good researcher and had performed research on “Prevalence of Physiological Neonatal jaundice and effect of Phototherapy in Kanti Children Hospital. He has done research on “Treatment of TB Resistance Cases a Trial Study in Nepal Medical College and Neonatal BW difference in Mongolian tribes in Nepal Medical College.

He has gained very good teaching experiences from different Medical Colleges such as BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal Medical College, Kathmadu, Nepal Academy of Medical Sciences, Bir Hospital, Kathmandu etc., He has published different research articles in the Nepal Medical Journal in different times and presented papers in different conferences.

STAC staff welcomed him in STAC family.

Visit of STAC Director to SAARC Secretariat

The Director of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre, Dr. R. P. Bichha paid a courtesy call on His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial on 17 March 2017 at the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu. During the meeting Dr. Bichha welcomed His Excellency explained the functioning of STAC along with its progress & challenges and future activities.

Visit of STAC by Dr. Jos Vandelaer, WHO/R Nepal

Dr. Jos WR, Nepal visited SARRC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre along with Dr. Subhash Lakhe, National Professional Officer, Communicable Disease Control, WHO county Office Nepal on 4th April 2017. A meeting with organized to provide the relevant information related to the STAC WHO/SEARO collaboration. The STAC is only one Collaborative Centre of WHO/SEARO in Nepal.



Visited of STAC by Dr. Peter Small, Founding Director, Global Health Institute, New York

Dr. Peter Small from Stony Brook University, New York visited STAC on 21st March 2017 and discussed with Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, about the functioning of STAC, its vision, mission and objective. He expressed his happiness by getting the information on TB and



(Discussion with Dr. Peter Small from Stony Brook University, New York)

HIV/AIDS in the Region.

Visit of STAC by a team from National Anti-TB Association

A meeting was held with the Dignitaries and Officials from Nepal Anti TB Association (NATA) and German Nepal TB Project (GENETUP) on 21 April 2017 at SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur with the objectives of the meeting were to strengthen and explore the areas of collaboration between STAC and NATA in different areas such as research, human resource development, sharing of technical expertise in TB laboratory, advocacy and awareness campaign etc.



Welcome and Farewell Visits

- **Visit of STAC by H. E. the Secretary General, SAARC and Director from SAARC Secretariat**

H. E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B Sial, Secretary General, SAARC and Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director, SAARC Secretariat visited STAC on 4th August 2017 and observed the infrastructure and the functioning of the Centre. Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC presented the progress of the Centre as well as explained about the challenges and problems related to the Centre.



(H. E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B Sial, Secretary General observing the progress of STAC)

His Excellency expressed his satisfaction on the progress and functioning of the Centre and assured to support the Centre. STAC highly encouraged by the suggestions and guidance provided by H. E. for exploration of innovative and effective programmes.

- **Visit of Director (Social Affairs), SAARC Secretariat**

Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director, SAARC Secretariat (Social Affairs) visited STAC on 3rd August 2017. Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director and STAC family welcomed her in the Centre and presented a brief presentation on Introduction and Progress of the Centre. She observed the Centre's infrastructure and available facilities.



(Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC welcoming Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director, SAARC Secretariat by offering souvenir)

- **Farewell to Director (Social Affairs), SAARC Secretariat**

A farewell function was organized at STAC in honour of Ms. Fathimath Najwa, out-going Director, (Social Affairs), SAARC Secretariat on 3rd August 2017. All staff of the Centre expressed their gratitude to Ms. Najwa for her support and guidance and cooperation to carry out the activities of STAC. Her guidance and co-operation to STAC was highly remarkable. STAC family wishes her a bright future.



(Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC awarding Letter of Appreciation to Ms. Fathimath Najwa, out-going Director, SAARC Secretariat)

- **Visit of a team from IOM**

A team consisting Mr. Paul I. Nortorn & Mr. Bishnu Rai from International Organization for Migration, Nepal Office visited STAC and discussed about the problem related to migrant TB and HIV/AIDS patients. The IOM works in migration management including migration health and the gender dimension



(Discussion at STAC between IOM team and STAC officials)

of migration in close collaboration with governmental, intergovernmental organizations.

- **Visit of Governing Board Member from Pakistan**

Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan, STAC Governing Board Member from Pakistan visited STAC on 1st June 2017 and observed the functioning of the Centre. He appreciated the work done for the establishment of SAARC Supra-national Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS in STAC and promised to help as much as he can for the establishment of this laboratory.

- **Visit of STAC by a team from Save the Children, Nepal**

Ms. Tara Chhetry, Chief of Party & Team from Save the Children, Nepal visited STAC on 19th June 2017 and discussed with the Director, STAC regarding cooperation and support in conducting activities for TB and HIV/AIDS. In the meeting, Introduction, Functioning and Progress of STAC was presented and discussed on joint venture with Save the Children, Nepal and STAC.



(Discussion for strengthening cooperation between two organizations)

- **Visit of STAC by Member of Parliament (MP) of Nepal**

Hon'ble Member of Parliament Mr. Sakal Dev Sukla visited STAC on 20th June 2017 and observed the functioning of the Centre. He interacted with staff about the problems to be faced during the office work and way-out to solve them. He assured to support STAC from his side in any aspects of the situation.



(Interaction between Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Nepal and staff of STAC)

- **Visit of National Programme Manager, NTP, Nepal**

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC along with the staff welcomed Dr. Kedar Narsingh K.C., Director, National TB Centre/NTP, Nepal at STAC on 4th July 2017. Dr. K.C. interacted in a meeting about the activities and cooperation between NTP Nepal and STAC. Dr. K. C. was newly appointed in the post of Director, National TB Centre, Government of Nepal.

- **Visit of STAC by Health Secretary, Ministry of Health, Government of Nepal**

Dr. Kiran Regmi, Secretary of Health along with the high-level dignitaries from Ministry of Health, Department of Health Services visited STAC on 20th July 2017. Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC presented Introduction of STAC, its functioning and challenges along with the future



(Dr. Kiran Regmi, Secretary of Health, Government of Nepal at STAC, Thimi)

programmes. Dr. Regmi expressed her satisfaction regarding the progress of the Centre and its activities in the Region.

- **Visit of High School Students from Lalitpur, Nepal**

A group of students along with their teacher from Sudesha School, Nakhkhu, Lalitpur visited STAC on 20th July 2017 and observed the infrastructure and functioning of the Centre. A presentation on Introduction of TB and HIV/AIDS, free Diagnosis & Treatment in



(Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC explaining about TB and HIV/AIDS to the school students during their visit to STAC, Thimi)

Government Hospitals and Health units were presented. Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC highlighted about SAARC and SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre and their objectives. Director, STAC also informed that Students are the partners of STAC to spread the messages against TB and HIV/AIDS in the community as Child Ambassadors.

- **Visit Dr. Md. Khurshid Alam Hyder,**

Public Health Administrator, WHO SERO Visited STAC and discussed the ongoing programmes of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre on 10 Nov. 2017



- **Visit Dr. Rouseli Huq, Chair Person of Governing Board Member of STAC**

Dr. Rouseli Haq, Director, MBDC NTP, DGHS Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Chairperson of Governing Board, to STAC on 27 November 2017 and observe the facilities and functioning of the STAC and discussed with Dr. R.P. Bichha, Director, STAC about the future activities of the centre and role played in SAARC Region for the control of TB and prevention of HIV/AIDS.



Visit Korean Team, 20 Dec. 2017

A team from Korea Digital Hospital Export Agency and The Korean National TB Association visited STAC and was led by Dr. Sailesh Kumar Shrestha, Medical Officer from NTC. The team discussed the activities, function and objectives of STAC.

Visit of STAC Team to New Delhi for SAARC Super-national Reference Laboratory or TB and HIV/AIDS



A team of Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director and Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, from STAC visited New Delhi, India from 2nd to 4th May 2017 to interact about the SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS which is going to be established in STAC. The team interacted with Dr. Rohit Sarin, Director, NITRD, New Delhi, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, ADG (TB) (STAC Governing Board Member from India), Central TB Division, New Delhi, Prof. Dr. Vithal Prasad Myneedu, Sr. Microbiologist/Head, Department of Microbiology, NITRD, New Delhi and Dr. Md. Khurshid Alam Hyder, *Regional Adviser, Tuberculosis*, WHO-SEARO, New Delhi, officials of Hites/find organisation regarding the initiation of SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS in Kathmandu under the organization of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre.

• Visit of Sri Lanka by Director, STAC in NTP Review

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC visited Sri Lanka to support in Review of NTP and Preventive Activities from 26th to 30th June 2017. STAC is supporting SAARC Member States for external reviewing of NTP upon their request. It is one of the regular activities of STAC to provide technical support for monitoring and evaluation of the TB and HIV/AIDS control programmes.

• Participation in Sixth Meeting of the SAARC Ministers of Health and preceding Meeting of Senior Officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Prof. Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director, STAC attended the Sixth Meeting of the SAARC Ministers of Health and preceding Meeting of Senior Officials organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 27th to 29th July 2017. The meeting was inaugurated by Honourable Dr. Rajitha Senaratne, Minister of

Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Government of Sri Lanka. Honourable Dr. Senaratne, in his address at the Ceremony, pointed out that non-communicable diseases, malnutrition and tuberculosis are identified as major health issues facing by the people of South Asia. In this context, Minister Senaratne shared the experience of Sri Lanka in



curbing the increase in non-communicable diseases and highlighted the important role of universal access to education and the empowerment of women.

STAC Director interacted with the Senior Officials regarding the progress, challenges and future plan of STAC.

Participation in NCASC Workshop on IRRTTR



Dr. R. P. Bichha, Director and Mr. P. Bhandari, Computer Technician, STAC participated in a two-day workshop organized by National Centre for AIDS and STD Centre (NCASC), organized by Government of Nepal from 6th to 7th April 2017 in Kathmandu. The title of the workshop was Implementing National HIV Strategic Plan (NHSP) 2016-2021 – Fast-Tracking “IRRTTR” in Nepal. The workshop was participated by key population from over 25 organizations working for prevention of HIV/AIDS in Nepal. Along with them, STAC also presented its presentation on Status and Challenges related to prevention of HIV/AIDS in SAARC Member States. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. R. P. Pant, Director General, Department of Health Services,

Government of Nepal and facilitated by Mr. Sambhu Kafle, NCASC, Ms. Mukta Sharma, WHO (Thailand), Dr. Raj Kumar Mahato, Director, NPHL, Government of Nepal, Dr. Marcelo Naveira (UNAIDS), Dr. Ruben del Prado (UNAIDS), and Ms. Marlou De Rouw (Constellation).

The programme was concluded with the remarks from Dr. Tarun Poudel, Director, NCASC.

Visit of STAC by students from Kathmandu Medical College (KMC), Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal

A team of KMC, Kathmandu visited the Centre on 10th Jan 2017 and observed the function of the Centre and attended class related to TB, its magnitude in Nepal and preventive strategy, clinical aspects of TB disease, management of DR/MDR and XDR TB along with the co-infection with HIV/AIDS. The team also imparted with the current situation of TB and HIV/AIDS in SAARC Region. The team of students got chance to discuss with the Senior Consultant Chest Physician Dr. Naveen Prakash Shah and Dr. Ajith Weerakoon, Epidemiologist regarding TB diseases and its preventive strategies.

Audit of Accounts of STAC for the year 2016

As per SAARC Standing Committee at its Twenty –Eighth Session held in Kathmandu on 19th-20th August 2002. The Audit of SAARC Regional Centers shall be performed by One Auditor each from the current Chair and the Next Chair. Joint Audit Report on the Accounts and Operations of the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (SATC) Kathmandu for the period of 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016 was held on 19-20 February 2017. The Joint Audit Team (JAT-16) was conducted by Mr Shayam Prasad Aryal (Director , Office of the Auditor, General of Nepal , Kathmandu, Nepal), Mr. Syed Sajjad Hyder (Director General, Office of the Auditor General of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan and Mr. Samiullah Khan (Chief Cost Accounts Officer , Office of the Auditor, General of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan delegation from Government of Nepal and Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Annex

Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC

List of Participants from SAARC Member States:

Bangladesh:

Dr. Rouseli Haq

Director MBDC

NTP, DGHS Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh

India:

Dr. Radhay Shyam Gupta

Dy. Director General

904 Chandralok Building, NACO, MOHFW, GOI, New Delhi – 110009

Maldives:

Dr. Ali Nazeem

Director, Medical services

Senior consultant in Medicine

Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital

Maldives.

Nepal:

Dr. Kedar N. K.C,

Director,

National TB Centre,

Thimi, Bhaktapur

Mr. Dadhi Ram Bhandari

Under Secretary (Director)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Regional Organization Division, Nepal

Pakistan

Mr. Javed Ahmed Umrani

Deputy Chief of Mission,

Embassy of Pakistan,

Kathamandu

Sri-Lanka:

Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne

Director

National Programme for Tuberculosis Control and Chest Diseases, Sri-Lanka

Annex 1

SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers and Cross Border Issues on TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes,

List of Participant:

1. Afghanistan:

Dr. Noor Agha Zahid
National TB Coordinator
NTP, Ministry of Public Health,
Kabul, Afghanistan

2. Bhutan:

1. Mr. Namgay Tshering
Chief Programme Officer,
Communicable Disease Division,
Department of Public Health,
Ministry of Health
Royal Govt. of Bhutan, Thimphu
2. Mr. Lekey Khandu,
Programme Officer,
National HW, AIDS and STS Control Programme, Dept of Public Health,
Ministry of Health
3. Mr. Chewang Rinzin,
Dy. Chief Program Officer,
National TB Control Programme, CDD, DoPH,
MoH, Thimphu, Bhutan
4. Mr. Rinzin Namgay
Chief programme officer
Vector-borne Disease Control Programme (VDCCP)
Gelephu, Sarpang District, Bhutan
5. Ms. Jamyang Pema,
Assist. Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Thimphu, Bhutan
6. Mr. Tshering
Counselor, H/SL, Thimphu
7. Mr. Phurpa Tenzin
Programme Officer

National Tuberculosis control Programme
Communicable Disease Division
Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Bhutan

8. Ms. Lila Adhikari
Laboratory Officer
National Tuberculosis TB Reference Laboratory
Royal Center for Disease Control, Serbithan
Thimphu, Bhutan
9. Mr. Jigme Thinley
Assistant Programme Officer
NACP
Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Bhutan
10. Mr. Yangchen Dolkai
Asst. Programme Officer
National HIV/AIDS and STI Control programme
Communicable Disease Division
Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Bhutan
11. Mr. Phub Zangmo
Adm. Assistant
Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health, Bhutan

3. India:

Dr. Raghuram Shyamsunder Rao
DADG (TB), Central TB Division,
Directorate of Health Services, Nirman Bhawan, Government of India

4. Nepal:

Dr. Ramesh Bikram Singh
Deputy Director General
Department of Health service, Teku, Kathmandu
Government of Nepal

Mr. Shambhu Kafle,
Senior Public Health Officer,
National Centre for AIDS and STD Control
Kathmandu, Nepal

5. Pakistan:

Dr. Nasir Mahmood Khan,

National Manager, National TB Control programme (NTP),
Chakshhezad, Islamabad, Government of Pakistan

Sri-Lanka:

- i. Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne**
Director
National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases
555, Public Health Complex, Elvitigala Mawatha, Colombo 05, Sri Lanka
- ii. Dr. Sisira Liyanage**
Director and Programme Manager
National STD/AIDS Control Programme,
No 29, De Saram Place, Colombo 10. Sri-lanka

SAARC Regional Training on Operational Research on TB and HIV/AIDS

June 12-16, 2017

Jointly organized by:

SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Kathmandu, Nepal & Government of India

Venue: The IIHMR University, Jaipur, India

List of Participants and Resource Person

S. No.	Name & Address of Participants & Resource Persons
Participants	
1.	<p>Dr. Namatullah Ahmadzada Head of New Initiative Department National TB Control Program-Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health, Afghanistan Darulaman Road, Kabul, Afghanistan Tel: +93777150390 E-mail: ntp.namatnid@gmail.com</p>
2.	<p>Dr. Ehsanullah Ehsan Advisor for HIV and AIDS Coordination Committee for Afghanistan National AIDS Control Program Ministry of Public Health, Afghanistan Darulaman Road, Kabul, Afghanistan Tel: +93700162750 E-mail: dr.ehsanullahehsan@gmail.com</p>
3.	<p>Ms. Yangchen Dolkar Asst. Program Officer National HIV/AIDS & STIs Control Program Department of Public Health Ministry of Health Thimphu, Bhutan Mobile +975 17859446 Email: ydolkar@health.gov.bt</p>
4.	<p>Ms. Tashi Dema Research Officer Health Research and Epidemiology Unit Policy and Planning Division Ministry of Health, Bhutan Thimphu, Bhutan Mobile. +975 1 7 94277 2 Email: tashidema@health.gov.bt</p>

S. No.	Name & Address of Participants & Resource Persons
5.	<p>Ms. Vinita Verma Program Officer Evaluation & Operational Research National AIDS Control Organization Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India 6th Floor, Chandralok Building 36, Janpath, New Delhi-110001, India Ph. No. 011-43509992 Mob: 9810170897 E-mail: vinita.naco@gmail.com</p>
6.	<p>Mr. Utpal Das Specialist (Knowledge Transfer) National AIDS Control Organization Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India 6th Floor, Chandralok Building 36, Janpath, New Delhi-110001, India Mob: 9958945996 E-mail: dasutpal78@gmail.com</p>
7.	<p>Mr. Umesh Chandra Routray Team Leader (TSU) Rajasthan State AIDS Control Society Directorate of Medical and Health Services Government of Rajasthan Swasthya Bhavan Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur, India Mob: 9828888741 E-mail: uroutray@gmail.com</p>
8.	<p>Mr. Prakash Narwani M&E Officer Rajasthan State AIDS Control Society Directorate of Medical and Health Services Government of Rajasthan Swasthya Bhavan Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur, India Mob: 9549650420 Email: mersacs@yahoo.com</p>

S. No.	Name & Address of Participants & Resource Persons
9.	<p>Dr. Anil Thapa Chief, PME-Data Section National TB Centre, Nepal Ministry of Health Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal Mob: 0977-9841218344 Email: anilthp@gmail.com</p>
10.	<p>Dr. Aurangzaib Quadir Deputy National Coordinator TB/Manager National TB Control Program National Institute of Health Chak Shahzad Islamabad, Pakistan Mob: 0092-335-5494444, 333-2238877 E-mail: draurangzaib@ntp.gov.pk</p>
Resource Persons	
1.	<p>Dr. V. S. Salhotra Addl. DDG (TB) Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India Nirman Bhawan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi, India Ph: 20361130 Email: salhotrav@rntcp.org</p>
2.	<p>Dr. Shashi Kant Office of the Head of Department Centre for Community Medicine All India Institute of Medical Science Government of India New Delhi, India</p>
3.	<p>Dr. R.P. Bichha Director SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS (STAC) Kathmandu, Nepal Email: drpbirchha@gmail.com</p>
4.	<p>Dr. A.P. Weerakoon Epidemiologist SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS (STAC) Kathmandu, Nepal Mob: 9823066416 Email: ajith_weera1964@yahoo.com</p>

S. No.	Name & Address of Participants & Resource Persons
5.	<p>Mr. Kailash Bahadur Karki Training Officer SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS (STAC) Kathmandu, Nepal Mob: 9841736555 Email: carkeykarki@gmail.com</p>
6.	<p>Dr. S.D. Gupta Chairman IIHMR University Institute of Health Management Research 1, Prabhu Dayal Marg Sanganer Airport, Jaipur-302029, India Ph: 91-0141-3924700, 2791431-32 Fax: 91-0141-3924738 E-mail: sdgupta@iihmr.edu.in</p>
7.	<p>Dr. P.R. Sodani Dean Training IIHMR University Institute of Health Management Research 1, Prabhu Dayal Marg Sanganer Airport, Jaipur-302029, India Ph: 91-0141-3924700, 2791431-32 Fax: 91-0141-3924738 E-mail: sodani@iihmr.edu.in</p>
8.	<p>Dr. Anoop Khanna Professor IIHMR University Institute of Health Management Research 1, Prabhu Dayal Marg Sanganer Airport, Jaipur-302029, India Ph: 91-0141-3924700, 2791431-32 Fax: 91-0141-3924738 E-mail: anoop@iihmr.edu.in</p>
9.	<p>Dr. J.P. Singh Associate Professor IIHMR University Institute of Health Management Research 1, Prabhu Dayal Marg Sanganer Airport, Jaipur-302029, India Ph: 91-0141-3924700, 2791431-32 Fax: 91-0141-3924738 E-mail: jpsingh@iihmr.edu.in</p>

**SAARC Regional Training on TB for Microbiologist on Culture & DST, GeneXpert/NAAT
and its Maintenance, New Delhi, India on 10-14 July, 2017**

Afghanistan

1. **Dr. Mohd Zaher Dildar**
Head of laboratory
National TB Control Programme,
Kabul
2. **Mr. Taslim Ahmad**
Lab Technician,
Regional Reference Laboratory,
Nangarhar Province,

Bhutan

1. **Mr. Ugyen Dorji,**
Senior Laboratory Technician,
Royal Centre for Disease Control (RCDC),
Thimphu
2. **Mr. Sherub Pheljay,**
Laboratory Technician,
DWN RH
Thimphu

India

1. **Dr. Prashant Upadhyay**
Microbiologist JALMA
2. **Dr. Gayathri,**
Microbiologist
IRL , Chennai
3. **Dr. Pratiksha Sharma,**
Microbiologist IRL Ajmer
4. **Dr. Jyothi Bhatt,**
Microbiologist NIRTH Jabalpur,
5. **Mr. Arjun,**
Microbiologist RIMS,
Raichur

6. Mr K Shrikanth,
Microbiologist,
IRL – Hyderabad

7. Dr. Pravesh Yadav
Designation:
Institute:

Maldives

Ms. Fathimath Ibrahim Manik,
Senior Laboratory Technologist,
Indhira Gandhi Memorial Hospital
Email: fathun222@gmail.com,
Contact: 00960 9985637

Nepal

1 Mr. Gokarna Ghimire
Medical Lab. Technologist
National TB Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur

2 Mr. Birendra Yadav
Medical Technologist
National TB Reference Laboratory,
Bhaktanour

Sri-Lanka

- 1. Dr Geethika Patabendige,**
Consultant Microbiologist,
National Hospital,
Colombo
- 2. Dr Mahen Kothalawala**
Consultant Microbiologist
Kandy Teaching Hospital

SAARC Regional Training on Management Information for Action

(MIFA) for Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes

01-05 September 2017, India

Resource Persons & Facilitators

Dr. P. Kumar, Director, NTI, India
Dr. V. K. Chadha, Head, Epidemiology & Research, NTI, India
Mr. R. Jitendra, NTI, India
Dr. Uma Shankar, Chief Medical Officer, NTI,
Dr. Somashekar, Sr. TB Specialist, NTI,
Dr. Ram Padarath Bichha, Director, STAC,
Dr. Ajith P. Weerakoon, Epidemiologist, STAC,
Mr. Sanjeeb Kumar Jha, Statistician, STAC

Participants

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Ajmal Alokozai

Data Manager

National AIDS control Programme, Kabul, Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan

Phone (O): 0093786424658

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BANGLADESH

Mr. Tapan Kumar Paul

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

National TB Control Programme, Directorate General of Health Services, TB Gate, Mohakhali,
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**SAARC Exposure visit to observe the best practices on HIV/AIDS in Nepal 11-15
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