

Minutes of the 71st CCM meeting

May 28, 2014

Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia

David Sergeenko - Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, CCM Chair

Maia Zivzivadze – on behalf of Mr. Giorgi Khechinashvili – member of the Healthcare and Social Issues Committee of the Parliament of Georgia

Archil Talakvazde – Deputy Minister of Corrections of Georgia

Tamaz Marsagishvili – on behalf of Ms. Ketevan Natriashvili, First Deputy Minister of Education and Science

Ketevan Tsikhelashvili - First Deputy State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality

Amiran Gamkrelidze – General Director of National Center for Disease Control and Public Health

Mamuka Japaridze – Director of National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases

Khatuna Todadze – Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction, Head

Tengiz Tsertsvadze - Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, General Director

Nino Kochishvili – on behalf of Mr. Philip Dimitrov, EU Delegation to Georgia, Head, Ambassador

Rusudan Klimiashvili – WHO, Head of Country Office

Tamara Sirbiladze - USAID, Health and Social Development Office, Director

Zurab Vadachkoria – Tbilisi State Medical University, Rector

Akaki Lochoshvili – GPIC, Executive Director

Lasha Zaalishvili – GHRN, Executive Director

Konstantine Labartkava – New Vector, Board Chairman

David Mikheil Shubladze – LGBT Georgia, Executive Director

Tamar Gabunia – URC, LCC; USAID funded Georgia Tuberculosis Prevention Project, Chief of Party

Elguja Meladze - Employers’ Association of Georgia, President

David Ananiashvili – “Georgian plus Group”, Director

Tamar Natriashvili – Former TB Patient

Izoleta Bodokia – HAPS Fund, Director

Dimitri Kordzaia - Georgian National Association for Palliative Care, Board Chairman

Secretariat

Natia Khonelidze – Administrative Assistant

Guests/Observers

Mariam Jashi – Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs

Sopho Belkania – Assistant to the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs

Irma Khonelidze – NCD/CPH, Deputy Director

Mzia Tabatadze - Program Health and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, GFATM/ LFA

Lela Bakradze – UNFPA, Assistant Representative

Agenda

15:00 – 15:10	Opening speech /remarks Mr. David Sergeenko , Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Acting CCM Chair
15:10 – 15:20	Report of the CCM Chair Selection Ad Hoc Committee/presenting of the results of e-voting
15:20-16:10	Discussion/Final Decision/Vote
16:10 – 16:20	Harm Reduction Programs in Penitentiary System Mr. Archil Talakvadze – Deputy Minister of Corrections of Georgia
16:20 – 16:30	Questions/Answers and Announcements

David Sergeenko – greeted the participants and thanked them for coming. He briefly overviewed an agenda and gave the floor to the members of the Chair Selection Committee.

Rusudan Klimiashvili – briefed the audience on the work undertaken by the Committee, the procedure and main criteria for making a decision that had been communicated to the members at all stages of the process. The Committee's nomination letter was submitted to the members on May 8, 2014 with the request to provide any suggestions/comments by May 19, 18:00. Ms. Klimiashvili stressed that no alternative candidacies were nominated though the Committee was open for discussing all suggestions/remarks. During the mentioned period CCM members expressed their support to the candidacy of Mr. Sergeenko. On May 19, a letter on behalf of local NGO-members of PTF was circulated among the members expressing the concern regarding a presence of CoI in case of Mr. Sergeenko as of CCM Chair. The rapporteur highlighted that the Committee did not identify a presence of CoI. Additional legal consultations were held. Speaking of the issue of some limitations imposed in case of CoI, Ms. Klimiashvili especially underlined that an ultimate decision-maker is CCM itself and not unilaterally its Chairperson.

Lasha Zaalishvili – expressed a gratitude to the members of the Committee for the work undertaken. He presented to the audience the main content of letter distributed in the name of Non-Governmental member-organizations of the PTF. He underlined that the letter is signed by all GF grants implementing NGOs including potential and former SRs. He expressed a notion on the presence of CoI based on the fact that the PR, NCDCPH is a legal entity under a state control established by the MoLHSA. The rapporteur announced that the decision of election of the Chairman with a CoI lies within the discretion of the CCM. Though the CCM should bear into the mind that provided the CoI is confirmed, according to the requirements of the GFATM, the limitations regarding taking part in discussion and making the decisions on some issues, inclusive of the paramount importance will be imposed on the Chairperson. Mr. Zaalishvili, on behalf of the PTF noted that Mr. Sergeenko was frequently absent to the CCM meetings and requested from him to officially announce his vision regarding current programs, including methadone programs, MARPs, and in general on the drug policy. He noted that several letters from the GHRN and Georgian Network of Drug Users containing a request of the meeting with the Minister was submitted to his office though no response was received. He provided the audience with information regarding an action undertaken by the GHRN and Georgian Network of Drug Users in front of the premises of MoLHSA. He stated that lack of coordination of the activities between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and MoLHSA and not sufficiently active role of the MoLHSA resulted in failure of the discussion of one of the draft bill on drug policy.

David Sergeenko – stated that the CCM represents a body where decisions are made by discussions and voting and not unilaterally by its Chairperson. He opened the floor for discussion.

David Ananiashvili – addressed Mr. Zaalishvili and stated that the notion presented by him does not represent a consolidated opinion of the whole PTF.

Lasha Zaalishvili – explained that afore-mentioned represents an opinion of all Non-Governmental organizations of the PTF involved in implementation of the GFATM grants.

David Sergeenko - stated that intensive consultations held did not identify the presence of CoI. He inquired why the issue of a presence of CoI had not been raised in the period of his term as Vice-Chair. He explained that the functions of the Vice-Chair do not imply the necessity to attend all CCM meetings but to substitute a Chair in case of his/her unavailability. While speaking on drug policy he explicitly noted that the CCM represents one of the bodies that discuss such important issue. Mr. Sergeenko underlined that he himself as well as a newly appointed Head of the Rehabilitation Center for Drug Addicts several times publically announced the plans and the goals set in the sphere of drugs policy. Mr. Sergeenko expressed his readiness to announce the plans set at the sphere of drug policy to all interested parties again. The Minister underlined that the limitations that can be imposed to the MoLHSA concern only concrete activities (e.g. selection of the PR) that can be also imposed on the Chair from civil sector. The main functions and responsibilities of the CCM as main coordinating authority in the country are discussion of the strategic issues. Mr. Sergeenko focused on the expression from the letter under discussion regarding unbalanced state policy and noted that such accusations need to be justified. He agreed to have a separate meeting with Mr. Zaalishvili though the date to be defined later on. Mr. Sergeenko opened the floor for discussion on the topic of election of CCM Chairperson.

David Ananiashvili - one more time presented to the audience the selection criteria. He also noted that the CCM and not its Chairperson unilaterally is a decision-making authority. The leverages to facilitate the implementation of the CCM's decision will only contribute to effective functioning of the CCM and performance of the GFATM grants. Mr. Ananiashvi stated that the Committee thoroughly discussed all other potential candidates. He referred to the issue of CoI and stated that such had not been identified neither by the Committee nor by legal consultations.

Akaki Lochoshvili – stated that the Chairperson should be a person with high credentials holding leverages for implementation and advocating for the CCM decisions. He noted that Mr. Zaalishvili's concept on the presence of CoI consists misinterpretation of the Private and Public services. A Supervisory Board of the Legal Entity of Public Law as well as its Chairperson is an implementer of a state control and not a representative or a defender of the interests of the organization. The afore-mentioned excludes the possibility of a presence of CoI.

David Ananiashvili – stated that in case the Chairperson is elected from Government Sector the Committee recommends the Vice-Chair to be elected form Civil Sector.

Khatuna Todadze – underlined the importance of the GAFTM funding, especially in terms of Harm Reduction. She spoke on the challenges of the transitional period of gradual shifting from

donor's to government's support and underlined the great importance of electing the Minister of Health as a CCM Chairperson for successful overcome of mentioned challenges. She noted that despite some difficulties the programs are implemented as initially planned.

Konstantine Labartkava – as a representative of community organization brought the attention of the audience to the existing challenges and great role of Ministry of Health in their overcoming, shortcomings in the drug legislation that triggered repressive measures against drug users. He noted that due to contribution of Mr. Sergeenko some progress in the sphere is observed. He stressed that the attitude of the Ministry of Internal Affairs towards drug users is rather strict and repressive. While speaking on the process of the selection of the Chair he expressed some frustration with regard of transparency of the process and non-existence of an alternative candidate. He stressed that there is no claims towards Mr. Sergeenko and his activities and expressed his hope to jointly overcome existing problems in the drugs policy.

David Sergeenko – reiterated that the decision making authority is the CCM itself. The important factor of observing transparency is the mechanism of making decisions by the vote. He noted that there were not any limitations/restrictions for nominating of an alternative candidate though it was not done. He addressed the audience to nominate an alternative candidate.

Comment: An alternative candidate was not nominated.

Amiran Gamkrelidze – noted that the problems existing in drugs policy require consolidated actions from government, non-government and international sectors. He stated that the decisions of the CCM are not followed by the relevant regulatory acts and that represent the main disadvantage of the CCM. The decree of the CCM envisages submission of the CCM recommendations to the government while making government's decision. Mr. Gamkrelidze seconded Ms. Todadze's opinion that the CCM should be led by a high level authority which is especially important in terms of NFM, increased government's co-financing and eventual transition to government's support. The PR of GFATM grant is a state organization which is an important factor for effective grants implementation in given circumstances. The rapporteur stated that the CoI issue had been discussed with the legal during the consultations. Mr. Gamkrelidze explicitly denied the presence of CoI and stressed that controlling functions of the MoLHSA towards NCDC as of the legal entity established by and controlled by MoLHSA will only contribute to coordinating and supervisory functions of the CCM. The rapporteur briefly overviewed the UN resolution on hepatitis C.

Tengiz Tsertsvadze – stated that the issue of either presence or absence of CoI can be an endless topic of discussion. He noted that the presence of CoI in some extent can be supposed in case of the representative of any entity (government, non-government, community) providing that the candidacy is actively involved in and well aware of HIV/AIDS field. Thus it should not be considered as being obstacle. The seeking the candidacy from external resources will limit the activities of the CCM to the extent of being only consultative body. It is highly advisable that the implementation of the CCM's recommendations will be ensured by the high level authority. This

notion is justified by the examples of other countries' CCMs. Prof. Tsertsvadze noted that before creation of the CCM the multisectoral Governmental Commission used to execute the similar functions that is an additional justification of the necessity of presence of a high political commitment. He referred to Mr. Labartkava and stated that not only narcology but at the first place the fight against AIDS and TB lies within the scope of activities of the CCM. Acute problems related to drug use including social ones are regulated by other state institutions. Afterwards, Prof. Tsertsvadze briefly overviewed the effortful way of establishment of AIDS Services and the challenges faced at the different stage of its establishment. Finally, Prof. Tsertsvadze reiterated absolute necessity of electing a high level authority as a CCM Chair for preserving the progress made and continuation of the successful functioning.

Tamar Sirbiladze – stated that according to the “Guidelines and Requirements for Country Coordinating Mechanism” section 6, item 65 there is no presence of CoI in case of nominated candidacy. Ms. Sirbiladze seconded the notion of appropriateness to elect a high level authority as a Chair. She referred to Mr. Labartkava and shared his concerns and agreed with utmost importance of the narcopolicy. She explained that afore-mentioned is within the competence of Interagency Coordinating Council led by the Ministry of Justice. She agreed with Prof. Tsertsvadze and stressed that the CCM's activities encompass the coordination of the response against the three diseases. Ms. Sirbiladze highlighted that the fact that CCM Georgia represents one National AIDS, TB and Malaria coordinating body should be taken into consideration while making a decision on election of the Chairperson.

Konstantine Labartkava – stressed the high prevalence of HIV among drug users.

David Sergeenko – explained that the discussion is about drug policy which represents the competence of other institution though in connection with the CCM.

Lasha Zaalishvili – stated that the CCM is obliged to ensure smooth implementation of the GFATM grants. Mr. Zaalishvili updated the audience on the activities undertaken by GHRN to ensure non-interruption of the program and acute existing problems such as shortage of supply material, need of equipment for 4 newly opened centers, raising funds for presenting to the bank a letter of guarantee. Mr. Zaalishvili underlined the importance of continuation of the program and suggested the CCM to address the GFATM with the request to allocate the necessary funds from the grant budget. He addressed Mr. Lochoshvili with the request to provide the recommendations with this regard.

Akaki Lochoshvili – responded that since 2009 the GFATM regulations have been significantly altered. Thus it is highly unrealistic to secure the GFATM approval. The CCM and the Ministry should get actively involved for regulation of the issue.

David Sergeenko – stated that all issues within the competences of the CCM will be comprehensively discussed and agreed upon in close coordination between governmental and non-governmental sectors. The Minister gave the floor to Ms. Khonelidze.

Natia Khonelidze – presented to the members the results of e-communication regarding election of the CCM Chair. 16 members of the CCM have expressed their enthusiastic support and approval of the nominated candidature (one of them Mr. Ananiashvili, member of the Committee). Two members of the Selection Committee (R. Klimiashvili and G. Kkechinashvili) expressed their opinion by nominating Mr. Sergeenko. On May 19, Mr. Giorgi Tvaliashvili in the name of PTF's NGOs circulated among the members the letter that was discussed earlier at the meeting.

The issue of election of Mr. Sergeenko as CCM Chairperson was put to the vote. The members filled out CoI forms.

Mr. Sergeenko, the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Acting CCM Chair was elected as CCM Chairperson by absolute majority of the votes. Two members abstained from voting. None of the members voted against the candidacy.

The members presented at the meeting signed CCM approval document on election of Mr. Sergeenko as of CCM Chair (attached).

David Sergeenko – thanked the audience for trust and for criticism. He expressed the readiness to use all available to him legal leverages for implementation of the decisions of the CCM that will be made through open and transparent discussions. The Chairperson gave the floor to Mr Talakvadze.

Archil Talakvadze – in the name of the Ministry of Corrections presented to the audience the initiative to scale up Harm Reduction Programs for prisoners, namely to introduce of the maintenance therapy. He expressed his hope that the initiative will be supported by the CCM. The Deputy Minister reviewed Harm Reductions Programs implemented in the penitentiary establishments and presented arguments for their expansion. The rapporteur stated that the endeavors towards scale up of the Harm Reduction Programs (e.g needle and syringe exchange) were not accepted by the previous management. All technical issues related to the introduced initiative will be the matter of discussion of the working group.

David Sergeenko – thanked Mr. Talakvadze and underlined the importance of detailed budgeting and project management. The Chairperson gave the floor to **Ms. Jashi**.

Mariam Jashi – underlined the importance of the decision made. She stressed the role of Mrs. Roelofs as of CCM Chairperson and stated that with election of Mr. Sergeenko the official leverages of lobbying the CCM decisions will become effective. While speaking of the Secretariat staffing the deputy Minister suggested the ToR of Executive Secretary to be substantially enriched and the position relabeled to the “Technical Advisor”. The proposed changes are aimed at more effective implementation of the GF programs and support of the execution of overall coordination and monitoring role of the CCM as the one National HIV, TB and Malaria Authority in the country. The updated ToR will be finally agreed with the members and GFATM.

At the discussion followed it was generally agreed that the person capable for the position should have a relevant experience in management of international grants and technical expertise in TB and HIV issues. The position to be relabeled to “Technical Advisor”

Afterwards Ms. Jashi focused on the TA necessary for conducting CCM EPA. The proposal to French 5% Initiative is under elaboration. In parallel the communications with EECA Technical Support Office in Sarajevo is ongoing. Ms.Jashi briefed the audience on the visit of French experts for discussing TB issues planned for September.

It was decided to develop and submit to French 5% Initiative the application requesting TA for facilitation of CCM self-assessment. The Secretariat was assigned the task to communicate with GFATM the issue of possibility to unite in one proposal two requests (self-assessment and visit of French experts). In light of given circumstances the preference to be given to TA on self-assessment.

The Deputy Minister informed the audience on the training by MSF France on introduction of innovative treatment regime planned for September 29. She highly appreciated an upcoming event as the part of collaboration between Georgia and France that will facilitate an introduction in the country so called “French treatment standard”. She highly appreciated the initiative presented by Mr. Talakvadze and addressed him with the request to present a brief review of current legislations with the purpose to identify possible legislative barriers. Ms. Jashi informed the audience on the visit of BBC’s team with the purpose to prepare for “The National Geographic’ the documentary on drugs.

Lasha Zaalishvili – suggested establishing of a Selection Committee for selection of the Secretariat Staff. He addressed Mr. Gamkrelidze and Ms.Khonelidze with the request to identify possibilities for allocation of the sum necessary for the bank guarantee.

Irma Khonelidze – thanked Mr. Zaalishvili and his staff for active involvement and cooperation in discussing programmatic issues. She stated that the contracts with all SRs had been signed with exception of GHRN. The contract had been already submitted to GHRN for sign off. As for allocation the sum for bank guarantee from the grant budget the refusal from GFAT was received.

Lasha Zaalishvili – underlined the importance of the problem and necessity to find workable solution.

Akaki Lochoshvili – announced that due to signing the contract between the GFATM and new PR he is leaving the CCM.

Khatuna Todadze – highly praised the initiative of the Ministry of Corrections.

David Sergeenko – addressed the attendees with the request of prior written communication on all on-going issues for better preparedness and response.

Mariam Jashi – stated that the uninterrupted continuation of the programs’ activities that was the highlight of the previous meeting was successfully achieved by April 30 with efforts of all interested parties. As per the request of the GFATM the letter of guarantee was prepared. The Deputy Minister extended special thanks to NCDC and GPIC for contribution to the process mentioned-above.

David Sergeenko – thanked the participants for having attended and announced the meeting as closed.

Decisions:

- **To elect Mr. Sergeenko, the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Acting CCM Chair as CCM Chairperson;**
- **In communication with the GFATM to update the ToRs of the Executive Secretary and rename the position;**
- **To develop and submit to French 5% Initiative the application requesting TA for facilitation of CCM self-assessment. The Secretariat was assigned the task to communicate with GFATM the issue of possibility to unite in one proposal two requests (self-assessment and visit of French experts). In light of given circumstances the preference to be given to TA on self-assessment.**

David Sergeenko

Chairperson

Natia Khonelidze

Administrative Assistant

