



Minutes of the 40th CCM meeting

April 16, 2009
11:00

Venue: National Center for Disease Control and Public Health

CCM Members:

Sandra E. Roelofs - Chairperson of the CCM;
Irakli Giorgobiani - First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
on behalf of **Mr. Alexander Kvitashvili**, Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
George Tsereteli - Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia;
Koba Khabazi - Member of the Parliament of Georgia;
Paata Imnadze – National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, General Director;
Levan Baramidze - National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Deputy Director;
Tengiz Tsertsvadze - Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Center, Board Chairman;
Khatuna Todadze - Research Institute on Addiction, Deputy General Director;
Archil Salakaia - Director of the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases;
Akaki Lochoshvili -Global Fund Projects Manager;
Tamar Sirbiladze – USAID, Senior Health Advisor;
Nata Avaliani - American International Health Alliance, Caucasus Regional Director;
Tea Tsagareli - “Save The Children”, Project Director;
Maia Kavtaradze - Project Coordinator, GOPA/KfW;
Rusudan Klimiashvili - WHO Country Coordinator;
Nikoloz Nasidze - MSC1, Program Director;
Iza Bodokia - HIV/AIDS Support Foundation, Director;
David Ananiashvili - “Georgian Plus Group”, Director;
George Kalandze – “Bemoni”, Executive Director, on behalf of Tamar Sirbiladze, Chairperson;
Badri Balavadze - Adviser of the Medical Department Ministry of Penitentiary, Probation and Legal Assistance;

CCM Secretariat:

Eka Iashvili - HIV/AIDS Technical Consultant;
Levan Sharashidze - TB Technical Consultant;
Natia Khonelidze - Administrative Assistant;

Guests/Observers:

Nikoloz Sadradze - ICRC, Head of TB Program;
Manoela Grozdanova – UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia
Lia Tavadze – UNAIDS, Social Mobilization Adviser;
Amiran Gamkrelidze – World Health Organization, WHO Country Program Coordinator for STIs/HIV/AIDS;
Levan Avalishvili – Jo Ann Medical Center Blood Bank, Director
Ketevan Chkhatarashvili – Curatio International Foundation, President

Agenda

11:00 – 11:10 **Opening speech /remarks**
 Mrs. Sandra E. Roelofs, Chairperson of the CCM

- 11:10 – 11:30** **Information on the 3rd Stop TB Partners' Forum held in Rio de Janeiro on 23-25 March 2009**
Mr. Levan Sharashidze - TB Technical Consultant, CCM
- Information on the Ministerial Meeting of high MDR/XDR – TB burden countries held in Beijing on 1-3 April/ The information on the proposal to be submitted to the Ninth Call for Proposals**
Mr. Archil Salakaia - Director of the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases
- 11:30 – 11:40** **The information on the proposal to be submitted to the Ninth Call for Proposals.**
Tengiz Tsertsvadze, Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, Chairman of the Board
- 11:40 – 11:50** **Main challenges in the field of blood safety and possible directions to their elimination**
Ms. Nata Avaliani - AIHA, Regional Director/ Caucasus
- 11:50 – 12:05** **Projects Implementation Status; information on approval of bridge funding and information on RCC Wave 6; country plans on Round 9th Proposals (HIV/TB)**
Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili - Global Fund Projects Manager
- 12:05-12:15** **Information on the visit of HIV/AIDS assessment team to Georgia**
Ms. Tamar Sirbiladze – Senior Health Adviser, USAID
- 12:15 – 12:25** **Effects of the Global Fund on Georgia's Health System Development**
Ms. Ketevan Chkhatarashvili - Curatio International Foundation, President
- 12:25 – 12:30** **Voting for Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani, First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia as a new CCM member**
- Voting for Mrs. Manoela Grozdanova, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia as a new CCM member**
- 12:30 –12:40** **Questions/Answers and Discussion**

Sandra E. Roelofs – greeted the participants of the meeting. Afterwards Mrs. Roelofs introduced Mrs. Manoela Grozdanova, newly appointed UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. She stated that the meeting with Mrs. Grozdanova had been already held and expressed hope that a lot of problems which were observed in the fields of AIDS, blood safety, hepatitis and other would be tackled in coordination and with assistance of UNAIDS. CCM Chairperson noted that Mr. Kvitashvili was absent due to the fact that he was visiting the Swiss Housing project and he might join the meeting later. She mentioned the Ministerial Meeting held in

Beijing that Mr. Archil Salakaia would present later. Afterwards Mrs. Roelofs briefly outlined the 3rd Stop TB Partners' Forum held in Rio de Janeiro and stated that high level representatives from relevant institutions were present at the event and gave the floor to **Mr. Levan Sharashidze** to share with the participants more detail information on the Forum.

Levan Sharashidze – briefly outlined the history, main objectives and the functions of the Forum. He highly emphasized the importance of the event and specified its high level participants. Mr. Sharashidze mentioned that the declarations were adopted within the frame of the forum and underlined their significance. Some issues of the declarations were brought to the attention of the audience. He gave brief description of the meetings held on the sideline of the forum. During the meeting with Mr. Peter Small, Gates Foundation the invitations to attend Pacific Health Summit in Seattle and the African First Ladies Summit in Los Angeles (with the status of a guest) were received. After careful consideration of the format of the aforementioned events it was decided that Mrs. Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs would NOT attend those events as the offered format and the agenda were not appropriate for the priorities of the First Lady and Stop TB Ambassador. The speaker specially emphasized the meeting with Dr Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary, Stop TB Partnership and Mr. Jorge Sampaio, UN Special Envoy to Stop TB. During the meeting with Dr. Marcos Espinal the strategy of the Stop TB partnership and new vision of the current developments in the region were discussed. The role of Mrs. Roelofs as Stop TB Ambassador was highly appreciated by Dr. Marcos Espinal. It was noted that 4-year term of service of Mrs. Roelofs as the Ambassador would expire by the end of 2009. The meeting with Mr. Jorge Sampaio, UN Special Envoy to Stop TB was mainly dedicated to the plans of further cooperation and future strategic visions in the region. Mrs. Roelofs offered an idea of joint mission to one of the high-priority countries with high TB burden (Ukraine, Azerbaijan). Mr. Jorge Sampaio eulogized this idea. Mr. Sharashidze underlined that the speech of Mrs. Roelofs had been under special attention, consideration and even under some pressure. He highlighted some points of the speech of Mrs. Roelofs given at the Forum. Finally, he greatly emphasized significance of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Stop TB Partnership and the Global Fund.

Sandra E. Roelofs – underlined the results achieved in the field of fighting TB in the region during her ambassadorship e.g. in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria and in Romania. She stated that Georgia could be an exemplary country for many neighboring states including Russia in terms of TB control. National expanded DOTS and its inclusion in the primary health care, scale up of MDR TB treatment, launching of MDR treatment in prisons, decreased prevalence with an increased detection rate - that is an incomplete list of recent achievements in TB control in the country. The Chairperson reiterated the importance of admitting the existence of the problem for its tackling and for reaching targets set. Mrs. Roelofs stated that a political factor should not play any role in the field of fighting TB and despite the fact that Stop TB had shown some discomfort with Georgia offering an ambassador she expressed her willingness and readiness to continue a dialogue with Stop TB Partnership and for further implementation of the activities providing their full compliance with her status. Mrs. Roelofs noted that her vision, as a CCM Chairpersons related to the TB control would be more concentrated on domestic issues.

Then **Mrs. Sandra E. Roelofs** gave the floor to **Mr. Archil Salakaia**

Archil Salakaia – briefly overviewed the Ministerial Meeting of high MDR/XDR-TB burden countries in Beijing. He stated that the organizers of the meeting were WHO, the Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China and the Bill&Melinda Gates Foundation. High level officials from countries with high burden of MDR-TB and XDR-TB, the representatives of National TB programs, donor organizations and technical agencies were presented at the meeting. Mr. Salakaia stated that the Georgian delegation contributed in developing of the Beijing "Call for Action", the document adopted within the frame of the Meeting. According to the rapporteur the leitmotif of the declaration is reaffirming of the fact that M/XDR TB poses a threat to global health security and undermines the efforts to implement Stop TB strategy. Mr. Salakaia stated that the document

recognized serious bottlenecks in terms of TB control. He underlined the commitment to strengthen laboratory system and to help mobilize the estimated 2 billion USD needed over the next two years to adequately finance TB and M/XDR-TB control and care with use of all available financial mechanisms, especially the Global Fund and UNITAID. While speaking of the commitment to move urgently towards universal access to diagnosis and treatment of MDR/XDR by 2015 expressed in the declaration Mr. Salakaia stated that universal access to treatment of Resistant TB in Georgia would be achieved by the end of current year. The document calls for substantially increased investment by Governments and all partners in research and development of new diagnostics, medicines and vaccines and urges WHO and technical agencies in the Stop TB Partnership to provide technical support. Mr. Salakaia emphasized the fact that Bill&Melinda Gates Foundation pledged their support to innovations with regard to TB diagnostics, treatment and vaccines. Afterwards the speaker stated that the last Partners' coordination meeting held on April 3, 2009 made a decision to request CCM an approval to submit to TGF TB proposal for Round 9 as well as proposal for RCC Wave 7. Then he presented the elements of the future proposal to be submitted to TGF: to strengthen National TB Control Programme management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and capacity building; to improve diagnosis of TB including M/XDR-TB; to ensure quality treatment of all forms of TB; to ensure patients' adherence to TB treatment by intensive patient support and follow up; to inform TB control actions by evidence-based information deriving from operational research.

The CCM members agreed that as Georgia has opportunity to apply to Round 9 and also to Rolling Continuation Channel (RCC) for round 4 TB grants, after the needs assessment and identification of the financial gaps, the comprehensive proposal will be elaborated and then it will be divided in two proposals: the activities that are considered as the continuation of the Round 4 TB grant will be reflected in the RCC proposal, while all activities related to the scaling up of the universal access to the DR TB management in the Round 9 proposal.

Tengiz Tsertsvadze – briefly specified the main components to be included in the HIV Round 9th call for proposals and offered to present the ideas and recommendations at the given meeting and during the process of development of the proposal. The members agreed on the main concept of the HIV proposal to be submitted to TGF.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Nata Avaliani**

Nata Avaliani - She briefly outlined the achievements within the frames of the National Safe Blood Program and the basic outcomes of the TGF Safe Blood Program Component. She determined the problems existing in blood system as follows: 60% of donated blood is tested by simple rapid tests; insufficient number of donations, usage of rapid tests and not fully reliable quality blood testing system at the regional blood banks; insufficient quality control, absence of SOP at small blood transfusion units of medical facilities. The following priority directions for enhanced blood system were introduced: development of National Safe Blood Strategy and establishing of an efficient working group for such purpose; development and establishment of national safe blood standards, consolidation of blood services and improvement of blood bank licensing and certification requirements, development and support of voluntary blood donations at the national strategy level. Ms. Avaliani gave special attention to the issue of importance of development of voluntary blood donation program and the first steps undertaken to this direction. Finally, she stressed the great importance of creation of proper policy in the field of blood safety and of support initiatives promoting voluntary blood donation.

Tengiz Tsertsvadze – raised an issue of importance of using PCR as a screening method

George Tsereteli – highlighted the issues of deficiency in blood donations and the issue of blood safety. He stated that the method of screening was in a very big extent connected with financial issues. He stressed the importance of promotion of voluntary donation. He addressed the audience with request to submit recommendations to the Parliament for further elaboration of legislation.

Nata Avaliani – underlined that the blood banks should be more consolidated and 3-4 solid blood banks should be operational instead of various blood transfusion units functioning at the moment.

Sandra E. Roelofs – supported the idea of establishing of working group which would be functioning under the CCM and which would be focused on the priority issues of blood safety such as consolidation of the system, screening methods, donation, development of emergency plan etc.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili**

Akaki Lochoshvili – stated that HIV/AIDS Round 2 project was shifted to the bridge funding mechanism which covers the period from March 1 to December 31. He indicated that Wave 6 HIV proposal was under the technical review and there were high expectations of positive answer by May-June, 2009 due to the fact that country had considered all TRP comments on Wave 4 proposal. Then Mr. Lochoshvili noted that TB and Malaria Round 6 projects were going to the Phase 2 clearance and the due to financial difficulties the recommendation to reduce Phase 2 budget by 10% for both grants was received. Afterwards he underlined the fact that TB partners Coordination Group agreed to submit proposal to TGF for RCC Wave 7 for TB Round 4 grant supported activities and reminded attendees that the budget should not exceed 140% of the existing grant.

Then he highlighted the fact that MDR TB management was being successfully implemented in the country with support of TGF. He stated that taking into account that both TB projects of Round 4 and Round 6 would be finalized by 2010 and to ensure the sustainability of MDR TB control system it was highly advisable to apply to Round 9th. He also considered it reasonable to develop and submit HIV proposal to Round 9th to cover existing in the country gaps for HIV/AIDS. He addressed the experts with request to coordinate their activities in order to avoid any overlaps in terms of the TGF projects (current, already submitted and projects in stage of development) as well as other projects implemented in the country. Finally, he briefly reviewed the implementation status of ongoing projects.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Tamar Sirbiladze**

Tamar Sirbiladze - briefly reviewed an analysis on HIV/AIDS situation in Georgia conducted by the experts from the (Global Health Technical Assistance) GH Tech project. She noted that the assessment would lay a foundation for the design of a new USAID funded project thus its main findings could not be shared with the participants of the meeting at this stage and information would be very general and mainly focused on the HIV/AIDS situation analyses in the country. The maintenance of low HIV prevalence was considered a big achievement especially taking into consideration an alarming HIV/AIDS situation in the neighboring countries. The reforms ongoing in Georgia were assessed as a positive factor albeit some concerns were expressed. Ms. Sirbiladze noted that the following issues were highlighted in the document: evolution of the epidemics, HIV/AIDS related stigma, political commitment and legislation. She underlined the fact that the great role of Mrs. Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs and efficiency of the CCM were emphasized in the document.

Tengiz Tsertsvadze – raised the issue of urgent need for rehabilitation of AIDS Center

Irakli Giorgobiani – affirmed the attendees that the above mentioned issue was of high priority and the decision would be made within the shortest period of time.

Sandra E. Roelofs – stated that the CCM secretariat addressed Mr. Kvitashvili, the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs and Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani, First Deputy Minister with the letter depicting the current condition of the AIDS Center and requesting prompt reaction to the situation observed.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Ketevan Chkhatarashvili**

Ketevan Chkhatarashvili – presented the study “Effects of the Global Fund on Georgia’s Health System Development” conducted by Curatio International Foundation. She expressed deep gratitude to the CCM members for their contribution. She indicated that it was a follow-up study to the basic research conducted earlier. Ms. Chkhatarashvili stated that the research was focused on the policy environment, NGO institutional capacity, HR for focal diseases, accessibility of health care services (HCS) for High Risk Groups and HIV/AIDS/TB positive patients. She also specified the methodology, survey tools, and main findings of the study. Ms. Chkhatarashvili presented the following conclusions of the study: TGF financing is crucial for focal diseases in Georgia; all registered patients are 100% covered with treatment component of the project; project investments in HR, infrastructure and equipment has contributed to the expansion of geographical coverage of services; The study identified the following crucial issues: sustainability of TGF financed activities; existence of national M&E system; attitude of health care providers (HCP) towards infected persons.

Eka Iashvili – put the issue of election of **Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani**, First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia as a CCM member to the vote.

The above mentioned person was elected unanimously as a member of the CCM.

Irakli Giorgobiani – thanked Mrs. Roelofs and the members of the CCM.

Eka Iashvili – put the issue of election of **Ms. Manoela Grozdanova**, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia as a CCM member to the vote.

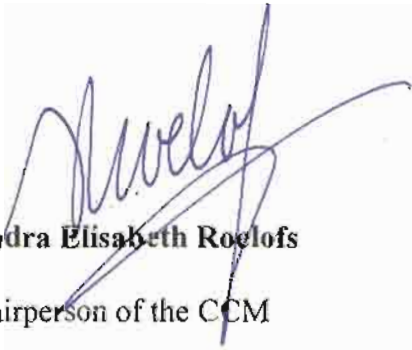
The above mentioned person was elected unanimously as a member of the CCM.

Manoela Grozdanova – thanked Mrs. Roelofs for invitation to attend the CCM meeting in Georgia. She stated that it was a great opportunity for her to start reviving and strengthening working relationship between the UNAIDS and national partners and stakeholders in Georgia in order to achieve targets set for the universal access for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. Afterwards Ms. Grozdanova shared with the attendees her personal working experience. She noted that since her appointment she had an opportunity to meet with Mrs. Roelofs and with most of the participants of the meeting. Ms. Grozdanova underlined that the issue of the AIDS Center was on the agenda during the first meeting with Mrs. Roelofs. During that meeting the UNAIDS was requested to identify an expert who would frame the policy related issues to the provision and organization of HIV treatment for people living with HIV in Georgia and specifically would look at the current condition of the AIDS Center. She stated that the consultant had been already identified and draft TOR had been developed and further consultations. She also stated that it was planned to provide the project to the UNAIDS to request support for capacity development and enhancement of the CCM and this project envisaged organization of the CCM meetings outside and funding for the key members of the CCM to attend international conferences. Ms. Grozdanova considered Georgia CCM functional, operational and committed and stated that she was impressed by the achievements in Georgia. She highlighted the issues of introduction of the Methadone Program, availability to HIV, hepatitis B and C testing at the VCT centers in prison settings, existence of National AIDS Strategy, and universal access to ARV treatment. She stressed the importance of work on finalizing of the M&E component.

Sandra E. Roelofs - thanked the participants of the meeting for having attended and announced the meeting closed.

Decisions:

1. Establishment of working group on Blood Safety under the CCM
2. To develop and submit proposals on TB and HIV to the Round 9th launched by TGF,
3. To develop and submit TB proposal to RCC Wave 7 launched by TGF
4. New member, Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani, First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, to be admitted to the membership of the CCM.
5. New member, Ms. Manoela Grozdanova, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, to be admitted to the membership of the CCM.



Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs
Chairperson of the CCM



Natia Khonelidze
Administrative Assistant to the CCM