



Minutes of the 47th CCM meeting

April 26, 2010

12:30

Venue: National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases

CCM Members:

Sandra E. Roelofs - Chairperson of the CCM;
Irakli Giorgobiani – First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
Nino Kochishvili – EU Project Manager on behalf of Mr. **Per Eklund**, Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Georgia;
Koba Khabazi - Member of the Parliament of Georgia;
Paata Imnadze – National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Director;
Levan Baramidze - National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Deputy Director;
Tengiz Tsertsvadze - Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Center, Board Chairman;
David Asafiani – Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance, Head of Healthcare Department;
Iagor Kalandadze - Director of the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases;
Akaki Lochoshvili –GHSPIC, Global Fund Projects Manager;
Lia Tavadze – UNAIDS advisor, on behalf of **Manoela Grozdanova** UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia;
Nino Tsereteli – “Tanadgoma” Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health Executive Director;
Zurab Danelia - Union of Victims of Conflict in Abkhazia “Tanadgoma”
Maja Kavtaradze - Project Coordinator, GOPA/KfW;
Rusudan Klimiashvili - WHO Country Coordinator;
Nikoloz Nasidze - MSCJ, Program Director;
David Ananiashvili - “Georgian Plus Group”, Director;
Elguja Meladze - Employers’ Association of Georgia, President;
Iza Bodokia - HIV/AIDS Support Foundation, Director;

CCM Secretariat:

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

Guests/Observers:

Amiran Gamkrelidze – WHO, National Coordinator for HIV/AIDS programs;
Nino Khetaguri - TGF HIV/AIDS Project Manager;
Keti Stvilia – Partners for International Development, Representative in Georgia;
Rola Shavlakadze – LTD City Station of Transfuse Blood, General Director;
Babilina Turkia – Head Specialist, Department of Healthcare, MoLHSA, Head of the CCM working group on blood safety;
David Otiashvili – Chairperson of NGO “Alternative Georgia”;

Akaki Gamkrelidze – Deputy Director of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health;

Tamar Sirbiladze - Expert Team leader, Chairperson of the Bemoni Public Union

Agenda

12:30 – 12:40 Opening speech /remarks

Mrs. Sandra E. Roelofs, Chairperson of the CCM

12:40 – 12:50 Welcome speech /remarks

Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani, First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia

12:50 - 13:05 TGF Projects Implementation Status/Discussion/ endorsement of the close out plan for Round 6 TB grant and of the proposal for the "continuation of services" of Round 6 TB grant.

Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili - Global Fund Projects Manager

13:05 – 13:15 Discussion of the final draft of Tuberculosis Bill

Mr. Iagor Kalandadze - Director of the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases

13:15 - 13:25 How Effective Street Drug Testing Is – results of the economic study

Mr. David Otiashvili - Chairperson of NGO "Alternative Georgia"

13:25 – 13:35 Overview of the safe blood policy

Ms. Babilina Turkia - Head Specialist, Department of Healthcare, MoLHSA, Head of the CCM working group on blood safety

13:35 -13:50 Overview of the State Methadone Substitution Therapy Programs

Mr. Akaki Gamkrelidze - Deputy Director of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health

13:50 - 14:00 Introduction of the Consensus Meeting - Estimating the number of IDUs in Georgia, April 21, 2010

Ms. Tamar Sirbiladze, Expert Team leader, Chairperson of the Bemoni Public Union

14:00 –14:10 Questions/Answers and Discussion

Sandra E. Roelofs – greeted the participants and thanked them for coming. Afterwards she briefly overviewed the important events of recent period.

Mrs. Roelofs stated that various Consultation and Working Groups Meetings had been held.

The Chairperson noted that mid-project review of Reform Options for the Penitentiary and Probation Systems for Convicted Child Offenders in Georgia implemented by the Government of Georgia and UNICEF with financial support of the European Union had been conducted and highlighted its importance.

Mrs. Roelofs stated that elaboration of Tuberculosis Bill was being actively performed in the Parliamentary Committees.

The Chairperson presented an agenda and gave the floor to Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani;

Irakli Giorgobiani – greeted the participants of the meeting and stated that Mr. Kvitashvili was absent due to the fact that he was attending Parliamentary Committee sitting in Khashuri. He raised an issue regarding rehabilitation work in Ksani TB zone and addressed Mr. Asatiani with request to update attendees with information on current developments in this field.

David Asatiani – pointed out that the rehabilitation of Ksani Medical Establishment was undergoing. Mr. Asatiani stated that the new penitentiary complex was opened at the territory of Ksani №7 General and Strict Regime Establishment which gave additional resources to curb the problem of overcrowding which emerged during the rehabilitation/construction period. The process will take approximately 3-4 months.

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

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Akaki Lochoshvili – introduced to the audience close up plan for Round 6 TB grant which included inventory of commodities, products & drugs, equipment and infrastructure and commitments of liabilities up to the ending date. The plan also includes commitments after the program ending date, program cash position at the date of reporting, type of reports that will be submitted with estimated costs and key dates of close out time frame.

He also informed CCM members that close out plan included request for funding for the Continuation of Services that had been covered by TB Round 6 grant. CoS is crucial for the NTP because country does not have sufficient resources to ensure sustainability of universal access to MDR TB diagnosis and treatment achieved in September 2009 with the Global Fund Grants support. The rapporteur stated that the proposal was elaborated in close coordination with all stakeholders involved in TB control. He stressed that increased price for second-line anti-TB drugs was taken into consideration in the process of development the financial part of the proposal.

CoS requests funding for the diagnosis and treatment of 564 MDR TB patients per year. Request for CoS covers two year period from the date of the ending of Round 6 Grant, total value of the request is EUR 7.2 mln. He also mentioned that TB proposal in Round 10 would be submitted and in case of approval, Cos either would be determined or consolidated with the newly approved grant. Mr. Lochoshvili requested CCM members to endorse the introduced close out plan with the request of CoS.

The members approved close up plan for Round 6 TB grant including the proposal for the "continuation of services" of Round 6 TB and decision to present it to TGF was made unanimously.

Afterwards the rapporteur briefed attendees regarding ongoing projects implementation and stated that decision regarding consolidation of HIV Round 2 RCC and R9 Grants under SSF had been made and thus one consolidated grant would be signed within one week period. He informed attendees that grant agreement included two major condition precedents:

- a. Funds for rehabilitation of the AIDS center will be disbursed only after completion of the architectural design of the building and legal proof of Government's cost sharing amount for the construction of the Infectious Disease, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research center
- b. TGF request that envisages elaboration and endorsement of the National M & E plan HIV/AIDS. According to this request, PR is obliged to facilitate process of the elaboration of M&E plan and further endorsement by the CCM and Government. This will be included as Special Condition Precedent (CP) in grant agreement.

CP regarding the elaboration and endorsement of the National M&E plan will be the part of the Grant agreement of RCC TB Round 4 Grant agreement as well.

The rapporteur noted that close up plan for Round 2 HIV grant would be elaborated and presented to the CCM.

Mr. Lochoshvili briefed attendees regarding the procurement mechanism introduced by TGF

"Voluntary Pool Procurement", which should enable country to procure high quality and low price

products. ARVs in the framework of the SSF grant will be procured through this mechanism. The same mechanism can be used for other grants as well.

He also updated CMM members regarding the request of TGF, to hire a lawyer to advise PR in regards to the updating legal status and internal structure of the PR to ensure sufficient operation. TGF requests to find better ways of the legal basis of the relationship with SR.

Sandra E. Roelofs – thanked Mr. Lochoshvili and gave the floor to Mr. Iagor Kalandadze

Iagor Kalandadze – introduced to the audience the Bill on amendments to the “Law on Public Health”. He briefly overviewed the articles of the Bill and focused on the following issues.

National TB Program, its structure, functions, management, reporting system, issues of financing, coordination with Government structures, NGO sector and International Organizations shall be regulated by the Government of Georgia. Prevention, case detection, treatment, information dissemination and other activities of healthcare facilities involved in TB control shall be regulated by the Normative Act of the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs. The Bill incorporates articles stipulating compulsory isolation of TB patients with the purpose to reduce spread of TB.

The terms and conditions of provision the families affected by TB with financial compensation is stipulated by the Bill. The document includes articles regulating sale of anti-TB drugs. The presentation was followed with discussion and dispute. The issue of compulsory isolation raised special attention and concern.

Sandra E. Roelofs – summarized the remarks and comments and stated that the draft document was a subject of further discussion and all details and controversial issues would be elaborated during the working process. The letter from the CCM to the Parliament with request to support and speed-up the process of Parliamentary hearing will be issued.

Then Mrs. Roelofs gave the floor to Mr. David Otiashvili.

David Otiashvili - introduced the questions, results, conclusions and recommendations of the research conducted for estimation how effective street drug testing is. The purpose of study was to find out how much Georgia spent on random street drug testing and consecutive legal measures in 2008; what were the impacts of the random street testing for the drug users in terms of their drug career/use, and the related disorders and what could be achieved if the funds specified would have been spent on increase of the availability of OST, or possibly other treatment or prevention measures. The results of the study shows that out of 43,029 drug testing cases that were performed in 2008, 19,302 (45%) were positive for one or more of the controlled drugs. 1,605 individuals were sentenced to prison term for repeated drug use based on evidence provided stripe tests that are seen as rapid/approximate only and, according to international standards, cannot be accepted as judicial evidence and should always be confirmed by standard laboratory methods;

18,076,245 GEL were paid as drug use related fines. Average drug testing episode took at least 8.43 policeman/hour (10% of the total working time). Based on most conservative, minimalistic calculations, the total annual cost of drug testing and consecutive legal procedures and measures constituted about 18 mln GEL. Afterwards the speaker shared with attendees the recommendation defined by the study, namely to remove article 273 from Criminal code, which will prevent sending some 1,600 people to prisons and saves more than 8 mln GEL in imprisonment costs. Research has consistently shown that imprisonment is not an effective option for reducing prevalence of drug use; to shift police priorities from hunting drug users to criminal activities that have either real impact on criminal situation, or on public safety; to allocate saved amount (8 mln GEL) to definition and enforcement of modern, structured National Drug Strategy and Action Plans of the EU style, that will introduce and /or expand effective demand reduction programs (treatment, harm reduction, rehabilitation, prevention) that are highly cost effective from the perspective of both society and state budget. Research has shown that inclusion in drug dependence treatment significantly reduces criminal behaviour and economic benefits of treatment several-fold outweigh its costs.

George Tsereteli – thanked the presenter for an interesting presentation and stated that some recommendations would be definitely considered in future work. Mr. Tsereteli underlined that study should also include the component calculating loss that the government and general population would have in case of release of imprisoned population detained for drug use. Hereby he noted that their majority are considered to be criminals.

Sandra E. Roelofs – thanked the presenter and Vice Speaker and stated that CCM planned to address the Legal Issues Committee with request to facilitate and speed up the procedures connected with review and adoption of a package of amendments to the Law on Drug Use. Afterwards Mrs. Roelofs gave the floor to Mr. Gamkrelidze.

Akaki Gamkrelidze – briefed the audience on the status of the State Methadone Substitution Therapy programs, the number of centres available countrywide and the fees paid by the patients for inclusion into the programme (40% counts on the patient and the rest 60% is covered by the Government). Hereby he announced the decision of the body to deliver free services to HIV patients. Afterwards Mr. Gamkrelidze stated the total number of patients currently undergoing the treatment within the State programme was equal to 900 and informed members on the creation of automatic apparatus for pouring out the liquid type methadone hydrochloride, the price of which was lower than of the analogues used abroad. The speaker has also noted that land plot was acquired in Dusheti Region with the saving/economy of the sum paid by the co-financed patients involved in the programme and mentioned that construction of rehabilitation centre for 100 patients had already started. Mr. Gamkrelidze underlined that the whole territory was almost fenced in and a workshop type premise for labour employment of patients was on place as well as Georgia hall type house. At the end the speaker showed the architecture of the building and thanked the audience for attention.

Sandra E. Roelofs – raised the question regarding the possibility to integrate TGF's free of charge treatment with the State programme in the regions of Georgia, with purpose the allocate a few number of places for those who are not able even to pay those 150 GEL out of their pockets.

Akaki Gamkrelidze – stated that the issue could be discussed and solution would be found.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to Ms. Tamar Sirbiladze and specially emphasized significance of estimation of IDU population and availability of reliable and unified data on IDUs number in the country. She encouraged all stakeholders to operate with the figures revealed by the study.

Tamar Sirbiladze – briefed attendees on the results of the study “Estimating the Prevalence of Injection Drug Use in 5 cities of Georgia Using Multiplier/benchmark method” and outcomes of Consensus Meeting which took place in Tbilisi in April to present the study results and to arrive at a consensus estimate of the number of IDUs in Georgia. The Meeting was held with participation and support of the CCM and UNAIDS.

Ms. Sirbiladze presented the target groups, methodology, aims and findings of the study. Calculation of the estimated size of IDU population in the surveyed cities revealed the following figures (main estimates): Tbilisi – 27 107 (23 694-31 532); Gori – 2 989 (2 537-3 570); Telavi – 557 (358-941); Zugdidi – 4 855 (3 945-6 089); Batumi – 5 937 (5 008 – 7 162). The statistical lower and upper limits are given at 95% confidence interval. Calculation of the IDU prevalence estimation in the surveyed cities revealed the following figures (main estimates): Tbilisi – 4, 03% (3,98 – 4,09); Gori – 3,61% (3,47 – 3,75); Telavi – 1,30% (1,19-1,42); Zugdidi – 4,63% (4,37-4,76); Batumi – 7,97 (7,79 – 8,15). The statistical lower and upper limits (at 95% confidence interval) were used to reflect the minimum and maximum ranges. Extrapolation from local to National prevalence estimate was made in order to meet need for overall national estimates. National prevalence estimates were produced for 65 cities of Georgia. The following consensus had been reached during the Consensus Meeting: The participants agreed to continue using the terminology “injection drug use” in similar studies.

The participants agreed to apply the age range of 18-64 for the IDU population size estimates. The participants approved the methods used for calculating IDU population size estimates. The results of the study and outcomes of the Consensus Meeting revealed the following figures: Estimated number of IDUs in Georgia is equal to 40,000. National prevalence estimates for the injection drug use is equal to 1.5%

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to Ms. Babilina Turkia.

Babilina Turkia – presented to the audience draft Blood Policy Framework. At the beginning of the presentation she focused on the bottlenecks observed in this field and specially underlined importance of encouraging voluntary blood donorship. Afterwards, she introduced main regulatory document of the activities of blood centers – “Law of Georgia on Donation of Blood and Blood Components” 1997 and specified the articles that had not been enforced since inaction of the Law. Then she announced the following recommendations aimed at eliminating major shortcomings existing in the field: strengthening the role of MoLHSA with an updated regulatory framework, expansion of the national blood safety program, reorganization of the blood service needs on a nationally coordinated basis, establishment of a stable finance mechanisms, ensuring necessary supplies for mandatory testing of all donated blood for blood borne pathogens and ABO immunology, development of appropriate national working standards for blood service, revision of current national registration/identification system, strengthening communication between blood service and hospitals, capacity building for the staff involved in blood safety chain. Ms. Turkia stated that in 2008 MoLHSA raised an issue regarding development of National Blood Policy and Blood Service Strategic Plan and specified general provisions of the draft document. Finally Ms. Turkia introduced the composition of the CCM working group and its main tasks.

Rola Shavlakadze – stated that the main purpose of the blood service was to supply target groups with safe and high-quality blood and blood components. Then she specified the factors required for implementing the purpose mentioned above: voluntary donorship, internal quality control (QC), “cold chain”, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), effective communication between blood service and hospitals, external quality control. Finally, she introduced activities implemented within the framework of TGF project and noted that the pilot project funded by UGF encompassed external quality control component which would become mandatory for all blood services.

Keti Stvilia - introduced a pilot external assessment study planned within the TGF RCC project to evaluate performance of blood testing laboratories of blood banks. The National AIDS Center will serve as a reference laboratory for the external QC of blood transfusion service laboratories. The AIDS Center itself undergoes proficiency testing through international scheme acrometrix (US based company). The AIDS Center will develop panels of known samples and will send to blood banks for proficiency testing. The study will include testing on HIV, HBsAg, HBC and syphilis. The pilot study will equip the National Blood Transfusion service with mechanisms for development of the External Quality Control Plan for this system which will be presented to the CCM and the MoLHSA for review and approval.

Sandra E. Roelofs – thanked the presenters and announced that Breast Cancer Marathon was scheduled for May 29. The Chairperson introduced other upcoming events, namely: UNGASS AIDS Review Meeting in New York, on June 10-11, XVIII International AIDS Conference planned to take place in Vienna on July 18-23 and specially underlined importance of the high level visit to Azerbaijan scheduled for May where health issues would be discussed at the regional level. Finally the Chairperson thanked the participants of the meeting for having attended and announced the meeting closed.

Decision:

To approve and submit close up plan for Round 6 TB grant including the proposal for the "continuation of services" of Round 6 TB grant to TGF.



Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs

Chairperson of the CCM



Natia Khonelidze

Administrative Assistant to the CCM