

Minutes of the 55th CCM meeting

October 31, 2011

Venue: Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, CCM Office

CCM Members:

Sandra E. Roelofs - Chairperson of the CCM;

Andrew Urushadze - Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MoLHSA);

George Tsereteli – Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia;

Irakli Giorgobiani – First Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;

Irakli Pochkhidze – First Deputy State Minister for Reintegration;

Nino Kochishvili – Project Manager, on behalf of **Mr. Philip Dimitrov** - Ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to Georgia;

Archimandrite Adam – Vakhtang Akhaladze – Patriarchate, Head of Healthcare Department;

Zurab Vadachkoria – Rector of Tbilisi State Medical University;

David Asatiani – Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance (MCLA), Head of Healthcare Department;

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

Khatuna Todadze - Research Institute on Addiction, Deputy General Director;

Akaki Lochoshvili –GPIC, Executive Director;

Lia Tavadze - UNAIDS adviser;

Tamar Sirbiladze – USAID, Senior Health Advisor;

Rusudan Klimiashvili - WHO Country Coordinator;

Maia Kavtaradze - GOPA/KfW, Project Coordinator;

Zurab Danelia -"TANADGOMA", the Union of Victims of the Conflict in Abkhazia, Executive Director;

Nino Tsereteli - Center for Information and Counselling on Reproductive Health TANADGOMA, Executive Director;

David Ananiashvili - "Georgian Plus Group", Director;

Elguja Meladze - Employers' Association of Georgia, President;

Fati Dzotsenidze - Georgian National Association for Palliative Care, Board Member;

Guests/Observers:

Mikheil Dolidze - Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;

Eka Laliashvili – Assistant to the Initiative of the First Lady “Don’t Worry, be Healthy”

CCM Secretariat:

Eka Iashvili - HIV/AIDS Technical Consultant;

Natia Khonelidze – Administrative Assistant

Agenda

11:00 – 11:10	Opening speech /remarks Mrs. Sandra E. Roelofs, Chairperson of the CCM
11:10 – 11:15	Brief overview of EECA Constituency meeting , Moldova, October 28, 2011 Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili - GPIC, Executive Director
11:15– 11:35	Welcome speech /remarks Mr. Andrew Urushadze, Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
11:35 – 11:50	Projects Implementation Status/ Brief overview of OIG mission to Georgia Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili - GPIC, Executive Director
11:50 – 12:00	Brief information from International Forum “MDG-6 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”, Moscow, October 10-12, 2011 Ms. Lia Tavadze –UNAIDS Adviser
12:00 - 12:10	Information on the treatment of Hepatitis C in the country Ms. Eka Iashvili - HIV/AIDS Technical Consultant to CCM
12:10 - 12:20	Implementation of Georgia Health Strategy for 2011-2015 Mr. Mikheil Dolidze – Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
12:20 – 12:50	Questions/Answers and Discussion

Sandra E. Roelofs – greeted the participants and thanked them for coming. The Chairperson briefly outlined the most important developments of recent period with a special focus on the following issues: USAID has awarded TB Prevention Project to the University Research Corporation (URC). The meeting with the leadership of the organization and its admission to the CCM membership is planned. The 3rd meeting of the Supervisory Board will be convened on November 3. The ToR and scope of activities of Ms. Signe Rotberga, newly appointed UNODC Country Manager for Georgia does not envisage the needs of the country. This issue had been discussed with UNODC several times during the negotiations regarding the presence of the organization in the country but unfortunately the opinion of Georgian side had not been taken into account. Mrs. Roelofs expressed her hope that the scope of activities of UNODC would be reconsidered in terms of real needs of the country. The Chairperson noted that the 55th CCM meeting is focused on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C issues as the main TB stakeholders are absent due to the fact that they are attending 42nd World Union Conference on lung health in Lille, France. Afterwards, the Chairperson briefly overviewed the agenda and gave the floor to Mr. Lochoshvili to introduce the most important outcomes of EECA Constituency Meeting held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova on October 28, 2011.

Akaki Lochoshvili – stated that mainly the following issues had been addressed during the EECA Constituency meeting in Moldova: election of new Alternate and Board Member and the Global Fund's funding for the region. Nomination of Mrs. Roelofs as an Alternate Member had been welcomed by the EECA as an invaluable asset for the Global Fund and she had been unanimously elected at the meeting. The new members of the Board will take over from May 2012 and will work till May 2014. At the second year of the term based on the rotation principle Mrs. Roelofs will serve as a Board Member.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Mr. Andrew Urushadze**

Andrew Urushadze – highlighted the importance of Government's 10-Point Strategic Plan for Modernization and Employment which includes main directions of socio-economic development of the country for 2011-2015. He stressed that MoLHSA was being actively involved in its elaboration. Further discussions with the broad range of stakeholders are planned. Mr. Urushadze also underlined the importance of reforms ongoing in penitentiary healthcare sector and stated that the roles and responsibilities of the MoLHSA and MCLA should be clearly defined which is especially significant in terms of planned equalization of penitentiary healthcare with healthcare system of civil sector. The minister noted that the Health Performance Assessment document will be revised and work on State Law on Pension is ongoing.

Sandra E. Roelofs – noted that the budget issues would be discussed at the next CCM session and expressed her hope that in the meantime the consultative meetings between the MoLHSA and TB and HIV stakeholders would be held. Afterwards, the Chairperson gave the floor to Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili to overview the visit of OIG and projects implementation status.

Akaki Lochoshvili – presented a brief outline of the OIG mission in the country. The field work has been undertaken from September 12 to September 30. The review covered all grants managed by the GPIC and its SRs. It also covered activities of the CCM and LFA. Country Diagnostic Review was followed by the second one. According to the information from OIG team leader the reason for repeated visit was insufficient qualification of the experts team (mainly procurement and finance) hired for the first visit. Hence during the second mission OIG fulfilled the same work with new experts team meaning that the findings announced at the debriefing of the first visit is either canceled or will be fundamentally revised. The debriefing after the second visit has not been held until now. The visit of the investigators followed the extension of the review. An official notification

on planned investigation had not been sent to the country. Mr. Lochoshvili informed audience that draft report from OIG is expected by December 2011. The reporter referred to the mission undertaken by the GF in the country with the purpose to develop CCM performance framework. Mr. Lochoshvili participated at the workshop on October 7 at the Global Fund's headquarters in Geneva held with the purpose to review a draft CCM Performance Framework pursuant to the Global Fund's Board decision in May 2011 (Decision Point GF/B23/DP17). Progress Update for Development of CCM Performance Framework is expected by December 2011. Mr. Lochoshvili noted that the agreement on Privileges and Immunities had been signed in Geneva on October 12 and underlined the importance of the document. Finally, the reporter reviewed current implementation status of the GF projects.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Lia Tavadze**

Lia Tavadze - briefly overviewed International Forum "MDG-6 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia" held in Moscow on October 10-12, 2011. The forum had been co-chaired by Russian Federation, UNAIDS, The World Bank, and the Global Fund. The Forum brought together prominent international experts, policy makers and stakeholders from Eastern and Western Europe, Central Asia and non-European G8 countries. The rapporteur stressed the political character of the event versus its scientific character. The emergence of Russia as a new donor as well as commitment and leadership of the Russian Federation in national and regional efforts to achieve MDG 6 had been stressed at the forum by high level Russian officials. Despite the fact that International community in general praises Russia's efforts to lead the processes aimed at tackling infectious diseases in the region the acute criticism towards Russia in terms of Harm Reduction programs, lack of the support of NGOs and the alarming HIV/AIDS situation in the country had been articulated at the forum. In terms of positioning Russia as a foreign donor it was boldly noted that 300 mln USD out of the 500 mln pledged by Russia represents the sum reimbursed to the GF. The Forum proposed a follow-up plan and certain actions for achieving MDG 6 in Europe and Central Asia.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Eka Iashvili**

Eka Iashvili – presented the situation related to the treatment of Hepatitis C in the country focusing on the following issues: the burden of the disease, epidemiological data, diagnosis, treatment and its outcomes, cost of the treatment, spread of HCV genotypes, factors affecting antiviral therapy.

While speaking on the epidemiological data the rapporteur stressed the need for conducting a new research to reveal the spread of disease in the country. She noted that the new guidelines on treatment of Hepatitis C had been recently issued under the edition of Prof. Tsertsvadze. Ms. Iashvili stressed that laboratory capacity for effective diagnosis of the disease is in place. She highlighted that GF funded project covers the treatment of HIV-HCV co-infected patients. The rapporteur underlined that most of the patients in Georgia cannot afford the treatment due to high cost of medications and expenses related to diagnostics. Ms. Iashvili reviewed the State Program on Hepatitis C and noted that it does not cover antiviral therapy. The rapporteur urged the audience to broad discussion aimed at searching the ways to raise the accessibility of the treatment. She noted that in terms of the high cost of the therapy at the initial stage the specific target group can be defined. The genotype of the virus, concentration of the virus, age of the patients and socio-economic factors can be used as criteria for inclusion in the program.

Sandra E. Roelofs – stated that the problem is very acute and needs further discussion and urgent actions.

At the discussion followed it was stated that the problem is compounded by high cost of diagnosis and treatment and high prevalence of Hepatitis C in the country. At the time given HIV–HCV co-infected patients and prison population have free access to treatment funded by the GF and Government respectively. It was noted that the MoLHSA recognizes the importance of the problem and the work towards putting in place the effective mechanism for providing the population of Georgia with access to diagnostic and adequate therapy is ongoing. The possibilities of commencement of co-finance mechanism, involvement of insurance companies had been discussed. The negotiations with the pharmaceutical company producing interferon are underway. The attendees recalled the time when global advocacy efforts had resulted in reduction of prices of ARV drugs and it was noted that the same actions are required in terms of interferon. The position of Mrs. Roelofs as the WHO Goodwill Ambassador and the GF’s Alternate member will be a great asset in lobbying and advocacy efforts at the international level to increase access to affordable Hepatitis C diagnosis and treatment.

The decision was taken to establish a working group with the purpose of working out the possible ways to adequate response to the problem and searching ways to reflect (even partially) the need of the population for diagnosis and treatment in the state budget.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to Mr. David Asatiani to present the WHO Best Practice Award given to Penitentiary Establishment #8 for successful implementation of the GF funded Methadone Treatment program

David Asatiani – briefly outlined the WHO network meeting on Prison and Health held in Italy on October 4-5, 2011. The video-message of Mrs. Roelofs had been presented and very well welcomed by the delegates. An ambitious programme of comprehensive reform in penitentiary healthcare had been introduced at the event. The Georgian Delegation extended an invitation to WHO HIPP to hold the 2012 Network meeting in Georgia. The specific details of the methadone programme in Prison #8 had been presented at the meeting.

Afterward Mr. Asatiani introduced the award to the attendees.

The Decision to award the Prison #8 with a WHO HIPP Best Practice Award had been made by International Judging Panel. The award is organized by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Prison and Health in London.

Khatuna Todadze – noted that Ms. Khatuna Kalmakhelidze, Minister of Corrections and Legal Assistance had granted special awards to Research Institute on Addiction as to the implementer of the program.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Mr. Mikheil Dolidze**

Mikheil Dolidze – presented healthcare strategy 2011-2015 entitled “Access to quality healthcare” and noted that the Strategy represents an integral part and one of the key elements of Government’s 10-Point Plan for Development of the Country. Mr. Dolidze stated that the title of the document reflects the main priority directions of the Government such as improved access and quality of healthcare services. Afterwards, the rapporteur presented the main indicators that had been reflected in the strategy: average life expectancy; demographic trends; major reasons for mortality; rates for infant and children under-five mortality; comparison of Georgia with other countries in terms of morbidity; distribution of disease burden across the age categories; adequacy of healthcare

expenditures; share of public and private expenditures; structure of household expenditures; human resources; quantitative need of nurses and doctors; efficiency of doctors in hospitals. In the discussion around the issue of human resources Mrs. Roelofs stated that the National Nursing Council had been established and this initiative would greatly contribute to the development of nursing in Georgia. The aim of the strategy had been identified as follows: to improve population's health through a reduction of disease burden and mortality by 2015. The rapporteur boldly noted that the year of 2015 represents the final date of implementation of the Government's 10-Point Plan as well as the deadline for achieving MDGs. The following key principles of the strategy had been identified: equal access; patient focused healthcare system; affordable and efficient health care; public-private partnership and enhanced free competition; transparency and public involvement; adequacy of resources relative to needs; inter-sectoral approach. Mr. Dolidze stressed the importance of promoting Healthy Life Style in terms of prevention of the diseases and stated that this direction remains under the priority directions of the Government. The following strategic objectives had been brought to the attention of the audience: reduction of inequalities in access to medical care; improvement of the quality of medical services; protections of the patients' rights; prevention of diseases, readiness for response to health threats; refinement of the health care system management and increase of the sector efficiency. While speaking on further development of the pathology service he noted that the initiative of Mrs. Roelofs regarding establishment of pathology laboratory had been reflected in the budget of 2012.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Eka Iashvili**

Eka Iashvili – announced that the article 11.3.1 of the contract between the National Center for Teachers Professional Development Center and the teachers developed within the framework of the project "Georgian Language for successful future" is in contradiction with the current legislation of Georgia, notably with the law on Patients' right and with the law on HIV/AIDS. The article says: "the employer is authorized to terminate the contract with the employee if the latter is diagnosed with TB, AIDS, STIs, Hepatitis C, oncological diseases, is in need for surgical interference ... or medical examination failed to diagnose the disease" Ms. Iashvili noted that the afore-mentioned wording will deepen stigma and discrimination. Mrs. Roelofs addressed the MoE with letter containing the request to eliminate this contradiction based on the consultations with MoLHSA. Ms. Iashvili addressed the representatives of the MoLHSA with the question if the consultations had been held. It was stated that the MoE had not addressed the MoLHSA with the initiative to hold the discussion until now.

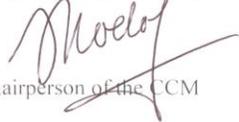
Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Mr. Tengiz Tsertsvadze**

Tengiz Tsertsvadze – according to the rapporteur preliminary analysis of the three months implementation of HIV/AIDS Prevention Program revealed some shortcomings and its less effective character versus the previous design. The new design of the program envisages HIV testing of the patients with AIDS clinical signs and Hepatitis B and C by the AIDS center while the testing of the rest of High Risk Groups (IDUs, TB patients, prisoners, STI patients) is implemented by NCDC and its sub-contractors.

Andrew Urushadze – opposed the opinion of Mr. Tsertsvadze albeit expressed the readiness of MoLHSA to further discuss with Mr. Tsertsvadze all details of the program implementation.

Sandra E. Roelofs – stated that the comprehensive discussion and analysis is needed especially in terms of the 2012 budget planning. Finally the Chairperson thanked the members and observers for having attended and announced the meeting as closed.

Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs



Chairperson of the CCM

Natia Khonelidze

N Khonelidze
Administrative Assistant to the CCM