

Minutes of the 63rd CCM meeting

March 21, 2013

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

Sandra E. Roelofs - Chairperson of the CCM;

Maiam Jashi, Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, on behalf of Mr David Sergeenko - Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MoLHSA);

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

Mr. Zurab Vadachkoria - Rector of Tbilisi State Medical University;

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

Khatuna Todadze - Research Institute on Addiction of the Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction, Head

Mamuka Japaridze - Director of National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases;

Akaki Lochoshvili –GPIC, Executive Director;

Lia Tavadze - UNAIDS adviser;

Tamar Gabunia – USAID Tuberculosis Prevention Project, Chief of Party

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

Maia Kavtaradze - GOPA /KFW, Project Coordinator, GPIC, TB Project Director;

Rusudan Klimiashvili - WHO Georgia, Head of Country Office;

Izoleta Bodokia - HIV/AIDS Support Foundation, Director;

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

Archil Talakvadze - Deputy Minister of Corrections and Legal Assistance;

Nugzar Chitaia – Head of the Unit of Development of Higher Education, on behalf of

Ketevan Natriashvili - Deputy Minister of Education and Science;

Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, First Deputy State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration;
Amiran Gamkrelidze – NCDC&PH, General Director

Guests/Observers:

Marika Gogvadze – Local Fund Agent, Team leader

CCM Secretariat:

Eka Iashvili - TB Technical Consultant

Maia Tsereteli – HIV/AIDS Technical Assistant

Natia Khonelidze – Administrative Assistant

13:00 – 13:10	Opening speech /remarks Mrs. Sandra E. Roelofs, Chairperson of the CCM
13:10 – 13:20	Welcome speech /remarks Mr. David Sergeenko, Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
13:20 – 13:25	Introduction and election Ms. Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, First Deputy State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration and Mr. Amiran Gamkrelidze, General Director of NCDCPH as new CCM Members
13:25 – 13:40	Projects Implementation Status/ The New Funding Model Mr. Akaki Lochoshvili - GPIC, Executive Director
13:40 – 13:55	GEO-T-GPIC phase 2 Renewal Ms. Maia Kavtaradze – GPIC, TB Program Manager, GOPA/EPOS, Project Coordinator
13:55 – 14:10	Discussion/endorsement
14:10 – 14:20	Functioning of the Western Georgia Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases Ms. Mariam Jashi – Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
14:20 – 14:30	Endorsement of National Tuberculosis Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2015 Ms. Tamar Gabunia - Chief of Party, USAID Georgia Tuberculosis Prevention Project, Head of working group

14:30 - 14:35	Current and Planned National Consultations on HIV/AIDS Country Response
14:35 – 14:45	Overview of a new package of drug legislation Ms. Khatuna Todadze - Head of the Research Institute on Addiction of the Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction
14:45 – 15:00	Questions/Answers and Discussion

Sandra E. Roelofs – greeted the participants and thanked them for attending. The Chairperson informed the participants about a TV shooting team which would attend a part of the meeting since they are working on a documentary dedicated to the First Lady. Afterwards the Chairperson overviewed the agenda and stated that on March 22, URC will conduct an event dedicated to the World TB Day. Within the framework of the event a video clip created with the purpose to raise awareness among general population and the calendar with children's paintings dedicated to the memory of Mr. Tengiz Gvasalia (Head of TB Pediatric Department) were shown. Mrs. Roelofs noted that the issue of a new generation anti-TB drugs will be discussed at the meeting in order to come up with a consolidated opinion with regard to appropriateness of the establishment of clinical trials in the country. The Chairperson underlined the importance of TB grant renewal for the country and stated that the proposal will be discussed and agreed during the meeting. Finally the Chairperson introduced two candidates for CCM membership and asked Eka Iashvili to put the issue to vote.

Ms. Eka Iashvili put the issue of electing **Mr. Amiran Gamkrelidze, General Director of NCDC&PH** and **Ms. Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, First Deputy State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration** as CCM members to vote.

Ms. Ketevan Tsikhelashvili and Mr. Amiran Gamkrelidze were elected unanimously as CCM members.

Sandra E. Roelofs – congratulated the newly elected CCM members. Afterwards the Chairperson focused on the draft OIG Investigation report and stated that two conference calls with the GFATM dedicated to discussion of the findings and recommendations of the investigation report were conducted. Afterwards Mrs. Roelofs focused on the report itself and on the CCM comments that consist of two constitutive parts: the response to the allegations towards the PR and the response to the created situation as a result. The Chairperson expressed her hope that the CCM and PR's response to the allegation will be given due consideration during elaboration of the final report. Mrs. Roelofs stated that the OIG final report will be publically available and thus the CCM should be ready to protect good reputation of the country, CCM, program officers, and the Global Fund itself. The Global Fund is ready to get involved its Media Center in afore-mentioned activities. While speaking of the recommendation of the OIG regarding changing of PR the Chairperson noted that it looks like changing of current (well-known and highly experienced PR) is unavoidable from July, 2013 and the CCM should be ready for this alteration. The pre-selection of the PR both from NGO and government sector will be given due consideration. To the Minister's opinion the election of the PR from Government sector would significantly increase the control mechanisms. Mrs. Roelofs underlined that the whole

process should not bring present programs in jeopardy which as a matter of fact is already doing. The Chairperson referred to the meeting with the representatives of the OIG, during the "audit" phase (prior to the investigation), when she was personally reassured that there were no doubts or serious concerns from the side of the OIG audit team that could lead to a further investigation.

Mr. Roelofs resumed in a few words what the OIG's accusations and recommendations were.

OIG firmly believes that PR should be changed, damages should be paid back and GPIC management team should no longer be involved in GF funded projects. The reasons are that the procurement practices of the PR and the awarding of the contracts were not transparent and had several breaches. On top of that, an employee of GPIC got an annual salary whereas she did not show up at the job (nor performed the tasks otherwise) because of pregnancy and later illness.

The Chairperson focused on the termination of incentive program (food vouchers) for TB patients by the GFATM that negatively affects their treatment adherence. Mr. Nicolas Cantau, Regional Manager, Eastern Europe & Central Asia during the communication with Ms. Eka Iashvili stated that domestic sources for providing TB patients with incentive should be found. Such statement seems to be especially surprising taking into consideration the fact that during the conference calls it was explicitly articulated by the GFATM that the content of the draft OIG report would not negatively affect the current programs and they will support smooth implementation of the programs and the current PR will fulfill their duties during the transitional period. Finally the Chairperson focused on the recommendation of the OIG to debar GPIC's Senior Manager, Program Manager and Program Officer from involving with any GFATM funded programs and stated that their longstanding experience, unique expertise and genuine commitment should not be lost. It should be taken into consideration that Georgia as a small country has a limited number of such highly-qualified professionals and thus an option to give them the chance to be active within the framework of implementation of GFATM grants in the future should be considered. The Chairperson stated that creation of the Oversight Committee will definitely strengthen oversight functions of the CCM. The draft Oversight Plan was sent to the GFATM and comments from their side are imminent. Afterwards, Mrs. Roelofs gave the floor to Mr. Lochoshvili.

Akaki Lochoshvili – stated that the GPIC has proposed to the GFATM the following two options: to create a special commission which will carry out the comprehensive and objective review; to involve the Audit and Ethics Committee in the discussion of this case. He expressed his hope that the reputation of the GPIC and its employees sullied by false conclusions of the OIG draft report will be fully reinstated. Afterwards the reporter focused on the implementation of the GFATM grants. He underlined that versus the GFATM guidelines stipulating that the programs should not be affected by any OIG missions they in fact are. Mr. Lochoshvili noted that the GFATM secretariat's suggestion regarding establishment of a cheaper and more easily administering of incentives for TB patients was taken into consideration by the GPIC though the final approval from the Global Fund has not been received yet.

Mamuka Japaridze – expressed a notion that it is much more difficult to control the mechanism offered by the Global Fund.

Akaki Lochoshvili – noted that the GF Secretariat demanded to establish mechanisms that will enable the PR to control that the cash ultimately ends up with the beneficiary, and that the patients will not be bullied/threatened to give away cash upon receipt and added that such request seems to be unrealistic.

While speaking of HIV grant he noted that a slight financial gap is anticipated during GEO-H-GPIC Phase 1 extension period. The deficit in ART medicines is anticipated on the long-term prospect.

The GFATM did not come up with any decision regarding rehabilitation of AIDS Center.

Mr. Lochoshvili underlined the seriousness of the problem regarding TB drugs (2nd and 3rd line) and stated that a few months deficit is unavoidable as these drugs will be delivered to the country with significant delay. **Mr. Japaridze** responded to the question of **Mrs. Roelofs** and stated that such deficit is observed both in civilian and penitentiary systems. **Maia Kavtaradze** explained that procurement mechanism of the Global Fund makes procurement of mentioned drugs at the local market impossible.

Mariam Jashi - agreed with the seriousness of the problem and noted that anticipated treatment holiday should be avoided by all means. Taking into consideration the rules prescribed by the state procurement mechanism she offered two options: to allot state funds to GPIC and allow them to procure the drugs; to procure the drugs within the framework of state procurement as a case of emergency. Responding to the question of Prof. Tsertsvadze regarding the mechanism of procurement imposed to the Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Center she stated that this issue can be further discussed with involvement of the representatives of Procurement Unit of the MoLHSA.

Amiran Gamkrelidze – underlined the necessity to support the local products and added that afore-mentioned should be compounded with a strict external control mechanism (test on bioequivalence).

Mariam Jashi – added that the MoLHSA acknowledges the appropriateness of this notion and some steps in this direction have been already undertaken.

Tengiz Tsertsvadze – addressed Mr. Lochoshvili with a question regarding nearly completed tenders on health products.

Akaki Lochoshvili – responded that the GF will come up with a decision after review of Progress Update and Disbursement Request (PUDR). Afterwards he stated that the side effect medicines have been procured but there is a threat they will not be used. The reason is that the private facilities in the regions refrain to take the medicines as they as intermediary recipients of TB drugs experience tax liability. The reporter stated that this issue was raised by him during the parliamentary hearing on February 21. At the current stage the temporary solution of the problem is handing the medicines to the penitentiary system. Afterwards he presented to the audience the main aspects of the New Funding Model (NFM) that has been launched on February 28, 2013. He stated that the country was placed in the 4th band of countries so-called “Target pool” (Higher-income, Lower-burden). He stated that our country as a Standard Applicant will not receive funding during the transition phase of the new funding model but may apply for funds during 2014-2016. Afterwards he focused on the two ways of apportioning country funding and associated

risks. He specially underlined that the current programs will be in jeopardy due to anticipated reduction of funding if the elements of the NFM during the period of transition to the second phase will be applied.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Ms. Kavtaradze**.

Maia Kavtaradze - presented to the audience a detailed description of the project activities and the budget proposed within the framework of GEO-T-GPIC grant renewal request. The following objectives were introduced to the attendees: **To strengthen the National TB Control Program management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation; To improve diagnosis of TB including M/XDR-TB; To ensure quality treatment of all forms of TB; To ensure adherence to TB treatment by intensive patient support and follow up;**

Ketevan Tsikhelashvili – addressed the audience with the question regarding providing the population of the conflict zones with adequate HIV/AIDS and TB services.

Akaki Lochoshvili – responded that continuation of providing the population of Abkhazia with HIV/AIDS services is envisaged by the HIV grant renewal. TB control activities are executed by MSF that will phase out by the end of 2013 to which Ms. Mariam Jashi said that this agreement was reached recently they would extend at least till end of 2014.

Amiran Gamkrelidze – underlined that the functions and responsibilities of all stakeholders should be clearly defined in the 2013 State Health program.

At the detailed discussion of the proposal followed the components of the proposal were subsequently agreed and endorsed by the attendees. The signatures were fixed at the hard copy of section 1.2 of the CCM Request for Renewal

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to **Mr. Gamkrelidze**

Amiran Gamkrelidze – presented to the audience the issues discussed and decisions made at the hearing of the Parliamentary Committee on Healthcare and Social Issues dedicated to TB Control held on February 21, 2013. A special emphasize was given to identification of weaknesses of State TB Program. With the purpose to strengthen TB control activities in the country it was decided to create a sectoral TB working group . The main directions of the work and tasks assigned to the working group were presented to the attention of the attendees. The reporter underlined that the highlight of the meeting was lack of coordination between main stakeholders.

Sandra E. Roelofs and CCM members congratulated Ms. Eka Iashvili with her birthday. A cake was brought in. At the same moment it was announced that Mr. Amiran Gamkrelidze's grand-son was just born. The attendees congratulated Mr. Gamkrelidze.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to Ms. Mariam Jashi

Mariam Jashi – presented to the audience an offer from MSF France envisaging putting in place protocols for testing of two new generation MDR TB drugs (the issue was discussed at the previous CCM meeting). Ms. Jashi stated that NCTBLD and GPIC have expressed their positive attitude towards the proposal. Ms. Jashi stated that upon receipt of a letter from the CCM an official response will be sent to MSF.

Sandra E. Roelofs – stated that in case the members are not opposed the proposed trial the CCM will welcome such an initiative.

No objection followed. The letter was given to Ms. Jashi by the end of the meeting.

Mariam Jashi – raised the issue regarding the functioning of Kutaisi TB hospital.

The main course of affairs presented is as follows: according to the agreement between the private investor and the Ministry of Economics the private investor is obliged to ensure placing of the TB services of Kutaisi TB Hospital and its staff in the newly renovated premises of Infectious Diseases Hospital. The staff of TB Hospital has expressed its disagreement with such decision in the series of letters addressed to the MoLHSA as they are unsatisfied with the physical infrastructure and space allocated for TB services and with the fact that the traditional role of Kutaisi Hospital as of TB Regional Coordinator will be taken away from the institution. Ms. Jashi stated that the investor is ready to abandon the decision of placing TB services in the premises of the Infectious Diseases Hospital in case the preservation of TB services in the separate building represents the priority for the State. The reporter stated that the premises allocated for TB services is in line with the standards, though the absence of the space for storage of TB drugs and preservation of the coordinating role of TB Hospital are the issues that require further discussion and decision making. Ms. Jashi addressed the CCM with the request to express its opinion with regard to appropriateness of preservation of the separate building for TB services especially taking into account the considerations towards strengthening TB management and preservation of a vertical system. Ms. Jashi noted that unless the decision is made according to current legally binding obligation the enforced placing of TB services into Infectious Diseases Hospital might be executed.

Sandra E. Roelofs – opened the floor for discussion and addressed **Ms. Gabunia** and **Mr. Japaridze** with request to express their opinion.

Tamar Gabunia – noted that since integrated TB service delivery system has good potential to improve patient care with less resources, restoration of the vertical system does not seem to be an optimal solution. Afterwards she underlined that the problems related to improper infrastructure are directly connected with weak regulatory framework that does not clearly and strictly oblige the service providers to ensure putting in place the infrastructure that is in full compliance with TB Infectious Control requirements.

Afterwards Ms. Gabunia noted that inspection of the premises allotted for Kutaisi TB Services executed by Tuberculosis Prevention Project coordinator revealed the absence of the separate entrance for TB patients and added that this bottleneck can be improved. She referred to the issue of the regional coordination and noted that execution by Kutaisi TB Hospital the coordinating functions seems to be unrealistic in terms of absence of regulatory leverage. In general the issue of regional coordination requires decision making at the legislative level.

Mariam Jashi – proposed to negotiate with the Ministry of Economics extension of the deadline set as of April 1, 2013 for another 2-3 months in order to make a comprehensive analysis of the situation and to issue a final recommendation.

Mamuka Japaridze – agreed with Ms. Gabunia and supported the extension of the deadline proposed by Ms. Jashi even for a longer period than 2-3 months. He added that versus verbal discussion the written formal decision regarding organizational structure of TB control services should be made. He highlighted that 2014 State Program should be thoroughly discussed and elaborated taking into account the lessons learned.

Amiran Gamkrelidze – stated that the investor has fulfilled the condition regarding creation of proper infrastructure for TB services. He noted that the matter is aggravated by anticipated optimization and downsize of TB staff. He supported extension of the deadline for the execution of the condition of the contract regarding placing of TB services in the premises of the Infectious Diseases Hospital. As the solution of the problem he offered the following options: the alteration of the condition and allotting more space for TB services or alternatively rehabilitation of the existing TB Hospital.

Mariam Jashi – noted that the standards for assessing organization of TB out-patient and in-patient services are not in place. As summary of the discussion she stated that as the first step towards setting the problem the issue of extending the deadline will be negotiated with the Ministry of Economics.

Maia Kavtaradze – raised a question with regard to the construction of a new building of the National Reference Laboratory at the NCTBLD, which is financed with the GOPA/KWF support and requested the MoLHSA to make a decision regarding the renewal of construction works that were terminated last year due to reasons caused by the construction company.

Amiran Gamkrelidze – noted that the laboratories already existing in the country are not working with a full load thus it would be more appropriate to place a TB Children's Department in the premises.

Mariam Jashi – responded that if the requirements of GOPA allow using the building for other services than laboratory the most optimal decision can be made.

Maia Kavtaradze - asked to reflect a final decision in the response to the letter of GOPA addressed to MoLHSA on November 2012.

Eka Iashvili – raised an issue on endorsement of TB Strategy and addressed Ms. Jashi with the question if the final draft of the Strategy is acceptable for the MoLHSA and thus can be put to vote at this meeting.

Mariam Jashi – responded that the Strategy document can be adopted as an Action framework for a short term transitional period with condition that work on further elaboration of a programmatic structure and regulatory framework will be continued.

Eka Iashvili – put the issue of endorsement of TB Strategy to vote.

The Strategy was unanimously endorsed by all presented members.

Sandra E. Roelofs – noted that the New Funding Model gives a special attention to alignment of the proposals with National Strategies and gave the floor to Ms. Tavadze.

Lia Tavadze – underlined the importance of HIV/TB integration. Ms. Tavadze referred to Mr. Michel Sidibe's call for zero parallel systems for HIV and Tuberculosis announced this week. The reporter underlined that HIV/AIDS National Strategy highlights one window principle and integration of HIV and TB services. Afterwards Ms. Tavadze announced that Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting (GARPR) update is taking place and Mr. Sidibe himself will be reporting to the Program Coordinating Board (PCB) in June, 2013 on the progress achieved since adoption of a new Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS in 2011. Two studies will be conducted in the coming months - HIV/AIDS estimates and mid-term review of National HIV/AIDS Strategy. Ms. Tavadze expressed her hope that additional consultations (including high level consultations in May) within the framework of aforementioned review will be supported by the Regional Office despite the fact that Georgian Representation of UNAIDS will be closed by the end of September. As a result of high level consultations the main directions of revised HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan will be presented to the CCM that will facilitate participation of the country in the GFATM New Funding Model. Ms. Tavadze referred to the letter of Mr. Mark Dybul, GFATM Executive Director to NGO sector that was shared among PTF members. According to the letter a replenishment meeting within the framework of NFM is planned for autumn 2013 and consequently in the period of 2014-2016 Georgia will have possibility to seek a new funding from the Global Fund. Above-mentioned activities will assist the country in such fundraising as alignment of the proposals with National Strategies is given a high importance by the GFATM. In response to the question of Mrs. Roelofs, Ms. Tavadze stated that according Mr. Malkin, UNAIDS Regional Director the attention given to Georgia will not be reduced, though identification of the UNAIDS focal point for the country is not planned. The reporter noted that UN joint team will continue its functioning and the UNAIDS will ensure revealing of the leading agency of the team. Finally Ms. Tavadze announced that UNAIDS is ready to support the country's communication with media on OIG report. She thanked the Chairperson for detailed information and stated that it will be communicated to the Regional Office.

Sandra E. Roelofs – expressed her hope that the CCM and PR's response will be taken into consideration by the OIG. The Chairperson announced that the Harm Reduction Network is planning to conduct a conference on March 25-26 and gave the floor to **Ms. Todadze**.

Khatuna Todadze – announced that an increase in the number of drug users is observed in the country which is mainly connected with use of hand-made drugs (dezomorphine). As a response to afore-mentioned in 2011 Interagency Coordinating Council was established by

the President's Decree. The Council has started development of national anti-drug strategy that will be finalized in a few months. Afterwards Ms. Todadze focused on the novelties offered by a new package of drug legislation initiated by Mr. Koba Davitashvili, the member of the Parliament that was directed towards decriminalization of drug use. Due to a lot of controversy caused by the legislative initiative just a few days ago it was decided that Mr. Davitashvili will terminate his initiative. An interagency working group with the purpose of development of a new package of drug legislation was established. The working group is comprised with representatives of MoLHSA, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, MCLA, Ministry of Education and Science, Parliament, Local NGOs, International Organizations, experts.

Lia Tavadze – addressed Mr. Archil Talakvadze with the question if the Ministry of Internal Affairs will be leading the work of Interagency Coordinating Council.

Archil Talakvadze – explained that unless any amendments the ownership will be still under the Ministry of Justice.

Khatuna Todadze – clarified that in terms of interagency nature of the Council transfer of the Council under the umbrella of the Prime-Minister or Vice-Premier can be considered.

Sandra E. Roelofs – announced that her WHO Goodwill Ambassadorship was extended for another term and stated that she will spare no efforts to be even more active and committed during a new Ambassadorship term.

The members congratulated Mrs. Roelofs.

Sandra E. Roelofs – gave the floor to the attendees to announce events planned within the framework of World TB Day.

Archil Talakvadze – announced that a big gathering with participation of former TB prisoners and current TB patients (only acid fast bacilli (AFB) negative patients to avoid threat of transmission of TB) is planned to be conducted at Ksani TB Rehabilitation Center. The special photo session dedicated to this event was done.

Sandra E. Roelofs - noted that His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II is a big supporter of TB patients and it would be nice if Mr. Iagor Kalandadze would suggest the World TB Day is mentioned in the Sunday Sermon.

Mamuka Japaridze – responded that this issue will be reflected in the Sunday Sermon, besides a written address of his Holiness was distributed among TB patients.

Tamar Gabunia - announced that a students' gathering will be held at Mtatsminda Park.

Amiran Gamkrelidze – noted that a special event dedicated to World TB Day will be held in the trading center Carrefour. Mr. Gamkrelidze announced that outbreak of rubella is observed in the country, underlined the importance of the vaccination and addressed Mr. Talakvadze with the request to take special measures for prevention of transmission of the rubella to penitentiary establishments. He stated that a big-scale immunization campaign will be conducted throughout the country in autumn 2013 and that special efforts should be

made for successful conducting of the immunization week. He assessed improved immunization as number one priority for NCDC and addressed Mrs. Roelofs as WHO Goodwill Ambassador with request to support these important initiatives.

Sandra E. Roelofs – expressed her readiness thereto and thanked the members and observers for having attended and announced the meeting as closed.

Comment: The conflict of interest forms were signed by the members before voting.

Decisions:

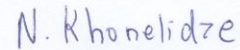
1. To accept to CCM membership Ms. Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, First Deputy State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration and Mr. Amiran Gamkrelidze, General Director of NCDCPH;
2. To endorse Proposal for renewal of GEO-T-GPIC grant
3. To approve MSF offer on trial of MDR TB new generation drugs
4. To endorse National Tuberculosis Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2015

Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs



Chairperson of the CCM

Natia Khonelidze



Administrative Assistant