



Draft 1.1

Minutes of the meeting of the Barents TB Programme Steering Committee

Date: 13 May 2011, 09:00 - 13:30

Venue: St-Petersburg, hotel "Holiday Inn"

Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by Ms. Alevtina Grishko, DM, advisor to the director of St-Petersburg TB Research Institute, who greeted the participants and underlined in her speech the importance, which is rendered to the 2003 Kirkenes Declaration in terms of enhancing cooperation in TB prevention. A number of TB projects have been successfully implemented in the Northwest Russia. In the Northwest Russia, the epidemiological figures are lower than in Russia on average, but problems remain. Among them are TB MDR and TB XDR, and HIV-associated TB. Control over epidemic is possible only through participatory efforts, and therefore the new Programme is a step towards such control, and the Programme may help achieve the goals and objectives of the new strategy "STOP TB".

Introduction of participants

After the welcoming speech the participants of the meeting introduced themselves.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

History of the Barents TB Programme development - *Ms. Outi Karvonen, ITA for NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections and coordinator of the Barents HIV Programme*

Ms. Outi Karvonen started her presentation with the review of the activity of the BEAR Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS) and Cooperation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues. One of the three prioritized areas of the Cooperation Programme was and will be, at least till 2015, infectious disease prevention, including tuberculosis. In this connection it was decided in 2009 to start developing a Barents TB Programme. The development process continued through 2010, and in autumn 2010 the Programme was adopted at a meeting of the BEAR JWGHS in Syktyvkar City.

Approval of the Steering Committee's structure and Terms of Reference. Nominations to the Steering Committee - *Mr. Zaza Tsereteli, ITA for NDPHS Expert Group on Primary Health and Prison Health Systems and Expert Group on Alcohol and Substance Abuse*

A proposal about the structure and Terms of Reference of the Programme's Steering Committee was distributed to the participants beforehand. Mr. Tsereteli reminded that, according to the proposed structure, the chairperson of the Steering Committee would be a representative from Russia. Besides, two Programme coordinators should be appointed - one from Russia, and one from the Nordic Countries. A proposal was made to appoint a vice-chairperson in case the chairperson is not able to attend a meeting. And, finally, the Steering Committee should include representatives of all relevant stakeholders. As for the Terms of Reference, Mr. Tsereteli remarked that the Barents TB Programme has a format similar to the Barents HIV Programme, with possible funding from the Nordic Countries. One of the Programme's purposes is to attract political attention, which in its turn can help draw resources. Afterwards, the participants were asked to make their comments.

Prof. Andrey Maryandyshev (Northern State Medical University) added that the chairperson of the Steering Committee should be from St-Petersburg TB Research Institute, and provisionally the candidature of Ms. Alevtina Grishko, Doctor of Medicine, advisor to the director of St-Petersburg TB Research Institute, had been agreed.

Prof. Petr Yablonsky, director of St-Petersburg TB Research Institute, remarked that Russia had gone 3 stages in the fight against TB in the last 10 years - a stage of drug supplies, a stage of laboratory equipping, and a stage of competence development. At the moment the fourth stage was starting, and the involved parties should build their work on the base of gained experiences and dynamic development. The achievements of the last 2 years confirmed that the direction for development was chosen correctly. And the TB Programme is a sort of a memorandum and a support in the process. The higher the goals are, the more accessible the resources are. Prof. Yablonsky underlined the openness for international cooperation and supported the proposed structure of the Programme's Steering Committee.

The candidature of Ms. Alevtina Grishko (St-Petersburg TB Research Institute) was approved in the position of the Programme's chairperson, prof. Andrey Maryandyshev (Northern State Medical University) in the position of the Programme's coordinator from the Russian side, and Mr. Zaza Tsereteli (NDPHS) in the position of the Programme's coordinator from the Nordic side.

The candidature of the vice-chairperson will be discussed separately by representatives of the Nordic Countries and proposed at the next meeting.

Mr. Tsereteli proposed that together with prof. Maryandyshev they make and send letters to regions with the request to agree upon candidatures from these regions into the Steering Committee.

Ms. Karvonen added that the Steering Committee should also include 1-2 experts on HIV.

Mr. Tsereteli added that WHO EURO plans to appoint its representative to the Steering Committee. In addition, a representative of the Nordic Council of Ministers should be invited.

Prof. Maryandyshev stressed out that representatives of the Russian penitentiary healthcare service should be involved into the Steering Committee.

Aside from this, as Ms. Tatiana Smolskaya (Paster Institute, director of the Northwestern Federal AIDS Centre) proposed, connections should be kept with the WHO Moscow office.

After this, Mr. Tsereteli presented the drafted Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee, which was developed based on the Terms of Reference of the Barents HIV Programme's Steering Committee. The proposed ToR was simple and clear, and did not stipulate obligations other than reporting before the JWGHS.

Overview of the TB situation and problems in the North-West Russia and Nordic Countries

First, the floor was given to Dr. Vladimir Galkin, chief of the TB monitoring laboratory at St-Petersburg TB Research Institute, who made an overview of the TB situation in the Northwest Russia.

Dr. Galkin reported about the TB situation in Russia, by federal districts, and in the Northwest Russia, by gender and age, with figures for the penitentiary system, TB MDR and XDR, and TB+HIV. According to the speaker, the current situation in Russia can be characterized as "shift from defense to offense on TB". The first successes have been achieved, and the attack moves eastwards (and southwards). From 2009, reductions in figures were achieved in all federal districts. But no overwhelming success was yet achieved. TB burden shifted towards younger ages. In the Northwest Russia MDR TB figures were higher than in Russia on average, which, in the first place, was accounted for by better microscopy. The current stage is also characterized by a start of MDR TB epidemic. If no progress is made in fighting against MDR TB, then the drug-sensitive TB will be eliminated, and the MDR TB epidemic will become a reality. The growth of accumulated prevalence of TB MDR and mortality reduction is observed. One of the influential factors is immigration, as there are cases which do not fall under control of TB services at all.

The TB incidence in the penitentiary system moves to stabilization (1,302 per 100,000). The contribution of the penitentiary system in the overall TB incidence is up to 14-20%. Out of all newly diagnosed TB cases recorded in Russia in 2010, 12% were diagnosed in the penitentiary system.

The government allocates more resources for TB response. But effectiveness of the measures does not depend solely on finance. Reliable data, control of quality standards in TB treatment, and information exchange are needed. And the Northwest Russia is an advanced region in this regard, whose experiences and developments should be developed and disseminated. In the Northwest Russia it is possible to ensure collection of reliable data and quality analyses.

The most burning problems at the moment are: drug-resistant forms of TB; control of quality standards in treatment; and HIV+TB co-infection (immediate prescription of ARV is needed).

As for the problem of registers, which were developing chaotically in the country, it is necessary to bend efforts to analyze possibilities of their unification. This job can be started with little resources. And St-Petersburg TB Research Institute is ready to participate in this work based on the example of the Russian Barents territories.

The review made by Dr. Galkin was followed by reviews from international experts - Ms. Rauni Ruohonen (Finland), Mr. Sven Hoffner (Sweden), Ms. Silje Haregrup and Mr. Einar Heldal (both from Norway). All

these countries are characterized by TB low incidence and prevalence. The groups of population, who demonstrate most cases, are elderly people and immigrants. The successfulness of treatment is rather high, but the level of knowledge among population and professionals is low. Besides, immigrants tend to not access health services, and therefore improving awareness is in the focus. To improve competence of healthcare professionals it is necessary to develop exchange of experiences, e.g. with Russian professionals. The reviews of the international experts were followed by exchange of information about specific features of diagnosis and management of TB cases.

Introduction of the Barents TB Programme - *Prof. Andrey Maryandyshev, Northern State Medical University / Archangelsk*

After the coffee-break prof. Andrey Maryandyshev made a presentation about the content of the Barents TB Programme. He told about the goals and objectives of the Programme, and its expected results. Comments were then made about the importance of the Programme from the viewpoint of prioritization of problems, monitoring of progress in TB response activity, and development of new project ideas.

Prof. Maryandyshev remarked it would be useful if all presentations made at the meeting were distributed to the participants.

Beside, Ms. Karvonen informed the audience about a project proposal regarding an international seminar on MDR TB submitted to the Finnish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which received rejection. Nonetheless, the project idea was alive and other sources of funding could be sought.

Next meeting

Ms. Karvonen proposed October-November 2011 for the next meeting. It might be possible to combine the meeting of the Steering Committee with some Russian big event on TB. According to the representatives of St-Petersburg TB Research Institute, on 20-22 October a big conference is planned in St-Petersburg (Hotel Pribaltiyskaja), when the Steering Committee meeting could also be arranged. Possible dates for the SC meeting could be 18-19 October. But it should be kept in mind that a big conference is arranged in France on 26-30 October, and the SC meeting should not overlap. It was proposed to discuss details by email.

Closure of the meeting

All items of the agenda have been discussed. Ms. Grishko declared the meeting closed.