In the wake of the global momentum and regional need, the Korean Institute of Tuberculosis (KIT) and the WHO Regional Office of the Western pacific (WPRO) jointly organized a regional consultation for effective engagement of the civil society and affected communities to End TB. Twenty participants from seven countries (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Mongolia, PNG, Philippines and Viet Nam), twenty three from twelve partner organizations (KIT, WHO, STP, MSF, JATA, ACTAP, APCASO, Global TB Caucus, KHANA, Results Korea, KOFIH and Stop TB partnership Korea) attended the workshop.

The workshop agreed that

- Building a strong coalition with civil society and affected communities is a major principle of the WHO End TB Strategy
- Engagement and partnership with affected communities and civil society is the key component of pillar 2 and a key crosscutting principle of the entire End TB Strategy and Regional framework.
- To reach the target of the United Nations high-level meeting, in the region, civil society and affected community need to be empowered, capacitated, invested in and systematically engaged.

Opportunities identified

- Civil society and affected communities to embrace all stakeholders with the common goal of ending TB (considering country context).
- Community-based intervention is an underutilized opportunity to find missing cases.
- Using broad multi-sectoral partnership platforms is essential for ending TB (including affected communities, parliamentarians, celebrities, private sector etc.) as well as to boost community and key populations’ engagement and resource mobilization.
• Adaptation of the accountability framework at the various level of the country and inclusion of broader indicators (affordable and acceptable access, quality, gender sensitivity, stigma etc.).

• Existing global and regional initiatives and tools to be utilized efficiently.

• Persons who have TB and TB survivors are effective TB advocates. There is a need to support their capacity building and mobilization to facilitate their inclusion and voices in key mechanisms such as Country Coordinating Mechanisms, national poverty alleviation agendas beyond TB, etc.

• Media including social media outreach is a powerful tool to raise the visibility of TB, reduce stigma, domestic resources mobilization and/or improve the utilization of existing resources. Experiences of persons who have TB and TB survivors, and affected communities, supported by data, can add even more effectiveness to such messages.

Proposed next steps

• The work plan including service provision and advocacy to be discussed and further refined at the country level.

• Country-level civil society platform (either using existing structure or initiate if not available) shall be considered.

• Involvement of non-traditional partners to be considered and they should be engaged.

• Involvement of national and sub-national authorities (including parliamentarians and opinion leaders) in implementation of the action frameworks.

• Community monitoring of TB programmes to be established as a part of multi-sectoral accountability at the local level.

• Innovative financing of community response to be considered.

• Global WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB to be utilized to communicate messages and experiences from countries and regions to inform global policies and actions, and vice versa.

Way forward

• The Regional Secretariat will follow up with the participants on ‘action plan’ finalization (3 months), on the implementation plan (6-9 month) and annual ‘score card’ of Regional response (12 months).

• ACT!AP hosted by APCASO volunteered to act as Regional Secretariat for at least 1 year (Proposed by Mr Chamreun, Executive Director, KHANA and supported by other ACT!AP members).

• Partners attending will support in technical assistance/tools and collaborate with Regional Secretariat.

• WHO across three levels (country offices, regional offices and headquarters) will facilitate engagement between the national TB programmes and CSOs and strengthening of coordination mechanisms (depending on the country context).

For further information:

www.who.int/tb/areas-of-work/community-engagement/en/