



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2015

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre  
Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal



# Annual Report 2015

## **SAARC Tuberculosis & HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)**

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# Preface

The Annual Report of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre is being presented indicating the programmes, activities and achievements of the year 2015.

This is the Twentieth consecutive comprehensive Annual Report of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC). This report provides a summary of the activities carried out by the Centre for the year 2015 along with introduction, goals, objectives, vision, mission and achievements of the Centre.



STAC implemented almost all regular activities assigned for the period of January to December 2015. The National Managers of the NTPs and NACPs are highly appreciable for their kind support to implement the activities.

Besides the regular activities, the Centre has performed its activities in publishing the different documents related to centre's activities and prevention of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Member States under the work of SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS 2013-17. The Centre has compiled 19 different guidelines and frameworks related to HIV/AIDS and circulated to the Member States and uploaded on the centre's website.

Let me take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Governments of SAARC Member States for their generous support. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the dignitaries of Ministries of Foreign/External Affairs of the SAARC Member States, His Excellency Secretary General of SAARC and respected Members of the Governing Board of STAC. I would also like to offer my special thanks to Ms. Fathimath Najwa, Director, Social Affairs Division, SAARC Secretariat for her continued support and guidance to implement the programmes.

The Centre continues to look forward to receive suggestions, guidance and comments on our activities, publications, website etc. so we can improve our activities as per the need of the people of the SAARC Region.

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Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma  
Director

# Executive Summary

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was set up in 1992, as a SAARC TB Centre which later on renamed as SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, working for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National Tuberculosis Control Programmes (NTPs) and National HIV/AIDS Control Programmes (NACPs) of SAARC Member States (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

The Centre mainly coordinates for the activities related to control of TB and prevention of HIV & AIDS among the Member States, particularly in research, training, workshops etc. in technical, bio-medical, operational and other aspects to support Member States.

In this year 2015, STAC carried out almost all regular activities assigned for the year.

In this year, STAC organized a meeting of National Programme Managers of NTPs and NACPs along with the Heads of National TB Reference Laboratories in Kathmandu. The members of the meeting shared the achievements and experiences related to the National programme of TB and HIV/AIDS. This time the National Programme Managers had opportunity to discuss the issues related to TB and HIV/AIDS with the Heads of the National Reference Laboratories. The discussion was based on SAARC Regional Strategy on TB and HIV/AIDS. The meeting also formulated several recommendations based on SAARC TB Reference Laboratory and its up-gradation as SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS. The team members of the meeting also made the recommendations on collaborative activities, such as encouraging participation from Member States in STAC activities, finding out the resources from external funding through the collaborative/development partners/stakeholders of STAC. Recommendations on Cross Border Issues on TB and HIV/AIDS, SAARC Conference on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases were formulated. General recommendations on important issue related to Tuberculosis (Urban TB, Childhood TB etc.) and HIV/AIDS (activities in major large cities etc.) were also formulated.

STAC has initiated research activities by providing STAC Regional Grant for Integrated Biological and Behavioural Survey (IBBS) of Most at Risk Population at HIV/AIDS In Maldives.

The laboratory has always played a critical role in diagnosis of tuberculosis and monitoring of treatment. The basic aim in tuberculosis laboratory is to generate accurate and reliable test results. The one of the components of quality assurance is proficiency testing of Sputum Smear Microscopy (SSM). STAC conducted its twelfth round proficiency testing of SSM for National Reference Laboratories of SAARC Member States. Feedback has already been given to the participating laboratories to ensure their quality.

For the purpose of disseminating the information regarding TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Member States, STAC has prepared different documents such as, Newsletter, Journal, Epidemiological Reports on TB and HIV/AIDS, Wall Calendar, circulation of Guidelines and Frameworks on HIV/AIDS available in the Member States.

A website has been maintained by uploading information related to TB and HIV/AIDS, as well as publications and information on activities of the Centre.

STAC Library has been set up as SAARC Resource Centre for TB and HIV/AIDS. The library is in the process of being developed as e-library.

## South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARC is an organization of eight countries located in the South Asia and it stands for the South Asian Association for Regional Corporation. The Secretariat of this organization is located in the Kathmandu which is capital of Nepal. The 3% of the area of the world is represented by SAARC countries. It is around 1.7 billion of the people and it is 23% of the world population<sup>1</sup>.

Six Member States share borders with India except Afghanistan. On the 8th December 1985 first SAARC Summit was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Pioneer members of the SAARC were Bangladesh, Bhutan, India Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Later, Afghanistan was awarded the full membership and there are several other countries were given observer memberships.

The objectives of SAARC, as defined in its charter, are as follows:

- a) to promote the welfare of the peoples of SOUTH ASIA and to improve their quality of life;
- b) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials;
- c) to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of SOUTH ASIA;
- d) to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;
- e) to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
- f) to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;
- g) to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and
- h) to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes

SAARC has established permanent diplomatic relations with the European Union and United Nations as observers. Foreign Ministers of the SAARC counties are met twice a year and the official meeting of the leaders of the SAARC Member States is held once a year. The recent 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit was held in the Kathmandu, Nepal on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014. It is planned to organize 19<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit in Pakistan.

Regional Centers have been established in Members States in order to promote regional cooperation. These Centers are handled by Boards of representatives from all SAARC Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> Data source: SAARC Epidemiological Response of Tuberculosis 2014



## SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)

SAARC Tuberculosis Centre (STC) was established in 1992. The Centre started its functioning as SAARC TB Centre in 1994. The Centre had been supporting the National TB Control Programmes of the SAARC Member States. The Thirty-first session of Standing Committee of SAARC held in Dhaka on November 09th – 10th 2005, appreciating the efforts of the



*(Office Building of STAC at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal)*

centre on TB/HIV co-infection and other works related to HIV/AIDS discipline and approved the renaming of the Centre as SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC). The Centre, with its efforts and its effective networking has been recognized by the Member States as a Centre contributing significantly for control of both TB and HIV/AIDS.

### **Vision & Mission of STAC**

The vision of the Centre is to be the leading institute to support and guide SAARC Member States to make the region free of TB and HIV/AIDS and the mission is to support the efforts of National TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes through evidence based policy guidance, coordination and technical support.

### **Goal and Objective of STAC**

The goal of the Centre is to minimize the mortality and morbidity due to TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region and to minimize the transmission of both infections until TB and HIV/AIDS cease to be major public health problems in the SAARC Region and the objective is to work for prevention and control of TB HIV/AIDS in the Region by coordinating the efforts of the National TB Programmes and National HIV/AIDS Programmes of the SAARC Member Countries.

### **Functions of STAC**

- To act as a Regional Co-ordination Centre for NTPs and NACPs in the Region.
- To promote and coordinate action for the prevention of TB/HIV co-infection in the Region.

- To collect, collate, analyze and disseminate all relevant information regarding the latest development and findings in the field of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region and elsewhere.
- To establish a networking arrangement among the NTPs and NACPs of Member States and to conduct surveys, researches etc.
- To initiate, undertake and coordinate the Research and Training in Technical Bio-medical, operational and other aspects related to control of Tuberculosis and prevention of HIV/AIDS in the Region.
- To monitor epidemiological trends of TB, HIV/AIDS and MDR-TB in the Region.
- To assist Member States for harmonization of policies and strategies on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV co-infection.
- To assist National TB Reference Laboratories in the Region in quality assurance of sputum microscopy and standardization of culture and drug sensitivity testing and implementation of bio-safety measures.
- To carry-out other important works identified by the Programming Committees/Governing Board.

## **Twenty Fourth Meeting of the Governing Board**

Twenty-fourth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was organized from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Board reviewed the activities carried out by the Centre in 2014 and recommended the Programmes & Budget of the Centre for the year 2015.

### **Recommended Programmes of the Centre for 2015**

1. SAARC Regional Training on Risk Communication on DR-TB and Parents to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS
2. SAARC Regional TOT on Line Probe Assay and Genxpert for diagnosis of patients at risk of MDR-TB
3. SAARC Regional Parliamentarian's Meet on MDG - 6 (Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS)
4. Building SAARC Regional Capacity on Epidemiology and Surveillance on DR-TB
5. The SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers on TB and HIV/AIDS Control and Heads of National TB Reference Laboratories
6. Visit of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador/s in Pakistan/Maldives and in Sri-Lanka/Nepal

### **Research**

7. STAC Regional Grant Integrated Biological and Behavioral Survey (IBBS) of Most at Risk Population at HIV/AIDS in Maldives
8. Research on support to diagnostic and management service in difficult to reach population in Afghanistan and Bhutan/Nepal
9. Research Grant to support National TB and HIV /AIDS in priority areas:

### **Regular Activities**

10. Presentation & Dissemination of Research findings on TB & HIV/AIDS through participation in International Conferences as well as in Regional Conferences (in Member States)
11. Meetings with Collaborating Institutions for Strengthening of Networking
12. Participation in the Review of activities NTPs and NACPs/ in the SAARC Member States.
13. Technical Assistant support to the NTP/NACP, of Member States and STAC by providing/hiring short term consultancy, utilizing the Expertise from the Region without financial liability to respective programmes of Member States.
14. Twelfth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Members States

15. Conferment of SAARC Award on Tuberculosis - 2015

### **Advocacy and Awareness Activities**

16. Commemoration of World TB Day & World AIDS Day and Celebration of SAARC Charter Day

17. Distribution of STAC publications and related documents

18. Review of Articles for SAARC Journals of TB, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS by external peer reviewers

19. Dissemination of information of TB & HIV/AIDS by updating STAC Website

20. Maintenance of the STAC laboratory

21. Updating existing Documentary on TB and HIV/AIDS and documenting Goodwill Ambassador's Programme and others activities.

22. Update regional data on TB, HIV/AIDS, and TB/HIV Co-infection and analysis to generate evidence to the region

### **Development of Manual, Guidelines**

23. SAARC Regional Programme Guidelines on Diagnosis and Management of Pediatric TB

24. Training of Trainers (TOT) Manual on Pediatric Tuberculosis and piloting

### **Printings and E-circulation**

25. STAC Newsletters

26. STAC Journals of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and HIV/AIDS-Issues:

27. SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection

28. SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS Control

29. Annual Report 2014

30. Report of Twelfth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Members States

31. Wall Calendar/promotional materials

32. A Hand Book of Abbreviations/Acronyms used in TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes

33. Collection, compile and e-circulation of published scientific articles and important news related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the National daily news papers/journals

### **Strengthening of STAC Library (Resource Centre)**

34. Acquisition & subscription of scientific books and journals on TB and HIV/AIDS

35. Strengthening of audio visual, digital system library service and maintenance of data base

36. Establishment of e-library facilities with maintenance of library software

## Twenty-fifth Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was held on 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Governing Board Members, Dr. Feda Mohammad Paikan, National AIDS Control Program Manager and Dr. Abdul Hadi Hadi, Advisor of CDC, Ministry of Health from Afghanistan, Mr. Mohammad Barikul Islam, Head of Chancery, Bangladesh Embassy, Kathmandu, Dr. Dorji Wangchuk, Secretary Health, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan, Dr. V. S. Salhotra, Addl. Deputy Director General (TB), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, Dr. Abdul Azeez Yoosuf, Consultant in Medicine, Government of Maldives, Dr. Bikash Lamichhane, Director, National TB Centre, Ministry of Health, Government of Nepal and Mr. Dornath Aryal, Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal, Mr. Javed Ahmed Umrani, DCM, Embassy of Pakistan, Kathmandu, Nepal and Ms. Fathimath Najwa, Director (representative of SAARC Secretary General), SAARC Secretariat and Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, SAAC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (Member Secretary) participated in the meeting. Dr. Feda Mohammad Paikan, Governing Board Member from Afghanistan chaired the meeting.

The Board reviewed the activities carried out by the Centre in 2015 and recommended the programmes & budget for 2016, which are as follows:

## **Recommended Programmes of the Centre for 2016:**

1. SAARC Regional ToT on Tuberculosis and Drug Resistant TB Infection Control
2. SAARC Regional ToT on Clinical Management of Drug Resistance TB
3. SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers on TB and HIV/AIDS Control & SAARC Regional Expert Group Meeting and review of SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2013-2017)
4. SAARC Regional Training on Anti-Retroviral Therapy
5. SAARC Regional Training on TB for Microbiologist on Culture & DST, Gene Xpert / NAAT and its Maintenance
6. SAARC Regional workshop to address the cross border issues for prevention and control of TB and HIV/AIDS
7. Development of the ToR of SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS and its Long Term Action Plan.
8. Preparatory work for SAARC Regional Third Conference on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases - 2017
9. Study on challenges in diagnosis of DR TB by Gene X-pert in Bangladesh and Nepal
10. Research grants for studies on TB & Diabetes and HIV & HCV (co-infection)
11. Presentation & dissemination of research findings on TB & HIV/AIDS through participation in International Conferences
12. Presentation & dissemination of research findings on TB & HIV/AIDS and capacity building on the technical and managerial skills of personnel of STAC
13. Participation in the review of activities NTP and NACP in the SAARC Member States.
14. Technical Assistant support to the NTP/NACP, of SAARC Member States and STAC
15. Meeting of collaborating institutions for strengthening of networking WHO/UNAIDS/UNFPA & other collaborating institutes.
16. Thirteenth Round Proficiency Testing of SSM for NRLs of SAARC Member States
17. Conferment of SAARC Award on HIV/AIDS - 2016
18. SAARC Goodwill Ambassador's Programmes for HIV/AIDS
19. Public Awareness and Advocacy programmes on TB and HIV/AIDS by -
  - Commemorating World TB Day & World AIDS Day and Celebrating SAARC Charter day
20. Distribution/e-circulation of STAC publications

21. Review of articles for SAARC Journals of TB Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS
22. Strengthening of SAARC Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS
23. Update regional data on TB, HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV Co-infection and analysis to generate evidence to the region
24. Identification and documentation of good practices (TB and HIV/AIDS) in the Region and widely circulation
25. Collection and sharing of all existing guidelines and frameworks (HIV/AIDS) relevant of the works of SAARC Member States
26. Preparation, development and Printings -
  - STAC Newsletters
  - STAC Journal of Tuberculosis Lung Disease and HIV/AIDS
  - SAARC Epidemiological Response on Tuberculosis & TB/HIV Co-infection 2015/2016
  - SAARC Epidemiological Response on HIV/AIDS Control 2015/2016
  - Annual Report - 2015
  - Revision of STAC at a Glance
  - Thirteenth Round proficiency Testing of SSM of NRLs of SAARC Members States
  - Wall Calendar - 2017 and other publications
  - Collection, Compile and e-circulation of published scientific articles and important news related to TB and HIV/AIDS in the National daily newspapers/journals
27. Strengthening of STAC Library by acquiring scientific books and journals on TB and HIV/AIDS and updating of library software

**Under the SAARC- UNDP/UNAIDS/UNICEF support**

28. SAARC Regional Workshop for Planning and implementation of safe & large city intervention for HIV/AIDS and develop a plan to fulfill these gaps in the SAARC Member States

**Activities carried forward from 2015**

29. Development of SAARC Regional Programme Guidelines on diagnosis and management of pediatric TB
30. Updating existing Documentary on TB and HIV/AIDS and documenting Goodwill Ambassador's Programme and others activities.
31. Training of Trainers (TOT) Manual on Pediatric Tuberculosis

## Activities carried out by the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre in

### 1. SAARC Regional Meeting of Programme Managers of National Tuberculosis Control Programmes, National AIDS Control Programmes and Heads of National TB Reference Laboratories of SAARC Member States, Kathmandu



As per the scheduled programme, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) organized a meeting of National Programme Managers on TB and HIV/AIDS along with the meeting of Heads of National TB Reference Laboratories of Member States in Kathmandu from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- to share the achievements, experience, innovations and challenges in NTPs, NACPs and National Reference Laboratories,
- to discuss on SAARC Regional Strategy on TB and HIV/AIDS,
- to develop/finalize activities/plan of STAC according to the need of the Member States before Governing Board Meeting.

The delegation from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal participated in the meeting.



## **Opening Session**

Dr. Kiran Regmi, Chief Specialist (Additional Secretary) Ministry of Health & Population, Government of Nepal graced the meeting as Chief Guest. In her opening address, she mentioned that the magnitude of TB & HIV/AIDS in SAARC Region is high due to poverty, migration, rapid urbanization, HIV/AIDS epidemic & MDR/XDR TB. She also added that the Government of Nepal has given priority to address the challenges for effective management of TB as well as HIV/AIDS control. She mentioned that HIV prevalence rate in Nepal is less than 1%, however, the high risk group of people, such as migrant workers, sex workers, drug users, trafficking of women/girls etc. is the problem. She mentioned that the community mobilization with involvement of private sectors in TB and HIV/AIDS control activities is very important. She appreciated the role played by the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre for control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the Region.

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC welcomed the guests and participants by delivering welcome remarks. He conveyed the message of His Excellency Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa for successful completion and fruitful outcomes of the meeting. Dr. Verma highlighted the objectives of the meeting along with its expected outcomes. He requested the delegates for their contribution in in-depth discussion on the current achievements, good practice and challenges on TB and HIV/AIDS control programme and he also requested to discuss on role of National Reference Laboratories in the Region. He concluded his welcome speech by wishing delegates a pleasant stay in Kathmandu.

## **Technical Session**

Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director, National Centre for AIDS and STD Control, Government of Nepal chaired the technical session of the meeting.

Dr. G. K. Bhatta, Research Officer, STAC made a presentation on “Current situation of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region and Laboratory Issues”. Along with his presentation he explained the achievements of the Centre and status of the implementation of SAARC Regional Strategies for TB and HIV/AIDS in the Member States.

## **Country Presentations**

Country presentations was focused on progress, innovations and challenges to achieve the MDGs, National policies & strategies and cross border issues on National TB & HIV/AIDS control programmes and the role of National Reference Laboratories in the region. It was also focused on the implementation of the SAARC Regional Strategies on TB and HIV/AIDS.

The review on implementation of recommendations adopted by the previous programme managers' meeting was performed. The delegation of the meeting discussed on the proposed programmes for the year 2016 to recommend in the upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Governing Board of STAC.

The delegations of the meeting discussed on long term plan of SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS along with the issues of strengthening of existing laboratory in STAC. The meeting made the recommendations on different issues, such as:

- Collaborative Activities
- Cross border issues on TB and HIV/AIDS
- SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS
- SAARC Conference on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases
- Matters related to TB and HIV/AIDS, such as urban TB, child-hood TB, compilation of epidemiological data and exchange of information on best practice etc. Similarly, it was also discussed to prioritize the large city intervention in the region on HIV/AIDS, preparation for elimination of parents to child transmission of HIV/AIDS and congenital syphilis in Member States in phase-wise manner.

### **Concluding Session**

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC thanked all delegates and chairperson for successful completion of the meeting. On behalf of the participants, Dr. R. S. Gupta, Deputy Director General (BSD, STI & BTS), NACO, MoH & FW, Government of India delivered the remarks. He appreciated activities being carried out by STAC in control of TB and HIV/AIDS in the region. He also suggested STAC for further development of SAARC Supra-national Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS. At the end he thanked for excellent hospitality offered by STAC, good arrangement for the meeting and support of the staff.

The Chairperson concluded the meeting with thanks to the delegates for their brain-storming deliberations, formulation of recommendations and fruitful contributions.

### **Recommendations for consideration by the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Governing Board:**

The meeting discussed in the different issues and challenges under the NTPs, NACPs and strengthening of SAARC TB Reference Laboratory as SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS and made the recommendations as per following:

### **Collaborative Activities:**

- i. The meeting discussed on the issues related to the low participation/non participation from Member States in the STAC activities - The meeting advised the Director, STAC and recommended to the Governing Board/Programming Committee for arrangement of external funding through the collaborative partners/stakeholders of SAARC.STAC for at least 4 – 5 regional level programmes of STAC.
- ii. Meeting also requests the line ministries for ensuring the full participation in the STAC activities.

### **Cross Border Issues on TB and HIV/AIDS**

- i. The meeting discussed on the cross border issues and proposed separate workshop for the year 2016 to develop the framework. The meeting advised the STAC to take the issue on priority.
- ii. Meeting also recommended STAC to coordinate for collaboration with related to international/regional agencies for technical and financial support to ensure full participation from Member States.

### **SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS**

- i. Considering the importance and role of SAARC supra-national reference laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS, the meeting recommended to hold an expert/technical group meeting for development of the TOR of Laboratory and Long Term Action Plan with time line.
- ii. The meeting advised the STAC to take care the provision of Comprehensive Maintenance and Care (CMC) during the time of procurement and installation of equipments for the SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS for at least 4 to 5 years.
- iii. Currently, STAC has networking with Ten National TB Reference Laboratories in the Region and networking with HIV Laboratories is already in pipeline. The meeting discussed and recommended for networking of all National Reference Laboratories of TB and HIV/AIDS in the region by 2016.

### **SAARC Conference on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Diseases**

The STAC organized two conferences in 2004 and 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The meeting discussed its importance for the region and recommended for holding this conference in every 2 – 3 years in the Member States in alphabetical order. If the concerned Member States will be unable for hosting the conference, the proposal will go STAC/host country or to next Member States. Accordingly, the meeting proposed the SAARC Third Conference on TB, HIV/AIDS and Respiratory Disease to organize in the year 2016.

## **Tuberculosis**

- i. Urban TB: The rapid urbanization is increasing in the region, which is also a challenge for management of tuberculosis in the slums of cities/mega cities in the Member States. In this context, the meeting recommended for initiatives for urban health care especially in slums, according to the SAARC Regional Strategy for Control/Elimination of TB.
- ii. Childhood TB – Case detection is very low in the Region. Childhood TB is also a priority of National TB Control Programmes of Member States and SAARC. The STAC has already initiated for development of SAARC Regional Strategy for Childhood TB with focus on early detection and availability of pediatric formulation. The meeting recommended for its effective implementation in the Member States.
- iii. Yearly epidemiological data of previous year (2014) to be received by July of next year (2015) from Member States.
- iv. Exchange of information/best practices to be shared by the Member States to compile by STAC as standard format bi-annually.

## **HIV/AIDS**

- i. HIV remains concentrated among key population and in major large cities in the region. The meeting recommended prioritizing the large city intervention in the region on HIV with focus on targeted, bridge population. The meeting also recommended that the SAARC/STAC to establish the regional mechanism with large cities in the Member States.
- ii. Preparation for elimination of parent to childhood transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis in Member States in phase wise manner. The meeting recommended for regional validation for elimination.
- iii. Yearly epidemiological data previous year (2014) to be received by July of next year (2015) from Member States.

## 2. World TB Day

March 24 commemorates the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced to the scientific community at the University of Berlin's Institute of Hygiene that he had discovered the cause of tuberculosis, the TB bacillus. At this memorable session, Koch appeared before the public with an announcement which marked a turning-point in the story of a virulent human infectious disease. In clear, simple words Koch explained the etiology of tuberculosis with convincing force, presenting many of his microscope slides and other pieces of evidence. At the time of Koch's announcement in Berlin, TB was raging through Europe and the Americas, causing the death of one out of every seven people. Koch's discovery opened the way toward diagnosing and curing tuberculosis.

In 1982, on the one-hundredth anniversary of Robert Koch's presentation, it was proposed that March 24 be proclaimed an official World TB Day. This was part of a year-long centennial effort by the IUATLD and the WHO under the theme "Defeat TB: Now and Forever."

In 1997 the Governments of SAARC Member States decided to commemorate World TB Day and SAARC TB Day on the same day with the same theme. Since 1997, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre is commemorating the day as SAARC TB Day also. The following are the themes of the World TB Day/SAARC TB Day:

### **2015: Gear up to end TB**

World TB Day 2015 was seen as an opportunity to raise awareness about the burden of TB worldwide and the status of TB prevention and control efforts.

### **2014: Reach the three million**

Of the 9 million people a year who get sick with TB, 3 million of them are "missed" by health systems. The focus of World TB Day 2014 was to take forward innovative approaches to reach the 3 million and ensure that everyone suffering from TB has access to TB diagnosis, treatment and cure.

### **2013: Stop TB in my lifetime**

The World TB Day 2013 campaign provided an opportunity to mark progress towards global targets for reductions in TB cases and deaths.

### **2012: Tell the world what you want to see in your lifetime**

For World TB Day 2012, individuals were called upon to join the global fight to stop TB in their lifetime.

## 2011: Transforming the fight

For the World TB Day 2011 campaign, the goal was to inspire innovation in TB research and care.

## 2010: Innovate to accelerate action

The World TB Day 2010 recognized people and partners who had introduced a variety of innovations in a variety of settings to stop TB.

## 2008-2009: I am stopping TB

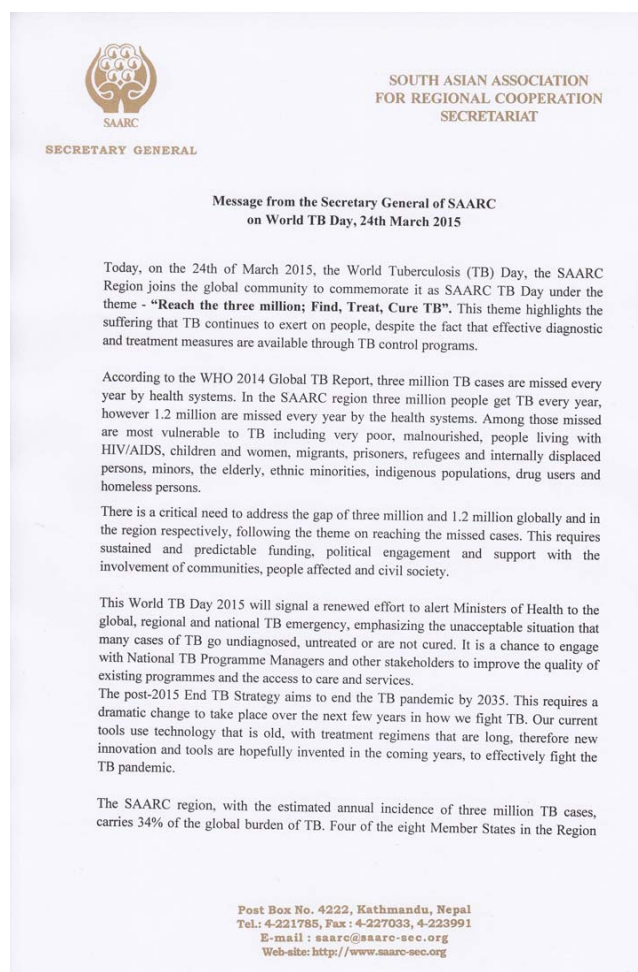
The two-year World TB Day campaign "I am stopping TB", launched in 2008 highlighted the message that the campaign belonged to people everywhere doing their part to Stop TB.

## Commemoration of World TB Day 2015 by STAC

Every year, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) commemorates World TB Day/SAARC TB Day by organizing different activities. The day is taken as an opportunity to advocate for the mobilizing support from policy makers, National & International Organization, women groups and community at large, in order to sustain the progress of National TB Control Programmes of Member States. This year, STAC organized the following activities to commemorate the World TB Day/SAARC TB Day for advocacy and spreading awareness for the control of Tuberculosis in the community:

### Publication of Message of His Excellency

H. E. Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General of SAARC released a message on the occasion of World TB Day/SAARC TB Day 2015. The message was circulated to the Member States for publication and STAC also published the message.



Message from H. E. Secretary General of SAARC (1st page)

## Interaction Programme with Nursing Students

On the occasion of World TB Day a one-day programme “Interaction Programme on Tuberculosis and its Preventive Strategy” was organized by STAC with students and teachers of Nursing Colleges at Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015 with the following objectives:

- to create public awareness on tuberculosis control,
- to discuss the role of Nursing Colleges on spreading of awareness in the community, on capacity building in service delivery, specially in TB control programme,
- to disseminate updated information on TB and its control and
- to seek coordination and cooperation for control efforts on Tuberculosis.

A total of 80 students and 5 teachers participated in the programme as participants from both colleges, Iwamura College of Health Science and Chakrabarti Habi Education Academy, Bhaktapur, Nepal.



*Message from H. E. Secretary General of SAARC (2nd page)*



*(Guests, participants and staff of the Centre)*

Students of the Nursing Colleges can play an important role in the National efforts to manage TB patients and save lives. They are in a unique position to reach various levels of health care system. They have the potential to create a new generation of health professionals who have updated knowledge about priority communicable diseases such as TB. The role of Nurses in National disease control cannot be denied. However, their active participation in National TB Control Programmes has so far been inadequate.

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC, welcomed dignitaries, participants and resource persons and highlighted objectives of the commemoration of World TB day along with SAARC TB Day. He accorded high priority on Public Private Mix programme in TB control. Dr. Verma highlighted the ways how to reach to un-reached and marginalized population. He thanked to the officials from the different organizations and students/teachers for participating in the programme.

Dr. Adwin Ceniza Salvador from WHO, Country Office, Nepal, presented paper on the TB control Programme at the global level. He highlighted the global burden, achievements and efforts for stopping the tuberculosis.

Dr. Bikash Lamichhane, Director, NTP, Nepal presented a paper on National Scenario of Tuberculosis in Nepal and efforts being made by NTP Nepal.

Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director, National Centre for AIDS & STD Control Nepal, urged to strengthen the collaboration between TB and HIV/AIDS Control Programmes.

On behalf of STAC Role of SAARC TB & HIV/AIDS Centre & SAARC Regional burden of TB was presented.

On behalf of the participating Colleges, Ms. Nisha Kiran Bhandari, Teacher from Chakrabarti Habi Health & Science College & Ms. Sanu Maya Khadka, Principal from Dr. Iwamura College of Health Science, Bhaktapur expressed their views. Both of them highlighted the technical importance of the programme and practical benefit to the nursing students. They also requested to continue this type of programme in future from which other nursing colleges should also take benefit.

Dr. Raj Kumar Mahato, Act. Director, NPHL Kathmandu explained the different methods of diagnosis of tuberculosis in Nepal.

Ms. Najwa Fathimath, Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat, appreciated the programme as Guest of Honour and quoted the World TB Day message of His Excellency, Secretary General of SAARC.

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director STAC awarded the souvenir to the representatives of participating colleges. He also delivered the vote of thanks and closing remarks.



Participants were made aware on issues in relation to TB and its control in Nepal as well as in the Globe/SAARC region. The participating nursing students and teachers showed their commitment to provide co-ordination and cooperation for spreading awareness regarding TB to the general people and they updated the role of nursing students for the control of TB.

### Preparation of Awareness Materials

T-shirt printed with slogan of World TB Day was prepared and distributed in the SAARC Member States and eye-catching hoarding board was placed at the entrance of STAC office with global and regional slogans.



### Participation in World TB Day Joint Programme, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015



*(National and International dignitaries at the joint function organized in Kathmandu)*

World TB Day 2015 was organized jointly by NTP Nepal, STAC and stakeholders at Nepal Academy, Kathmandu on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The programme was graced by the Hon'ble Dr. Yagya Bahadur Karki, Member, National Planning Commission, Nepal as the Chief Guest.

The programme was chaired by Mr. Shanta Bahadur Shrestha, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population Government of Nepal.

His Excellency, Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General, SAARC, attended the programme. Dr. Senendra Raj Upreti, the Director General, Department of Health Services, delivered welcome speech.

His Excellency Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General, SAARC issued a Message on the occasion of World TB Day/SAARC TB Day 2015. The message was conveyed to National TB Control Programmes of SAARC Member States to publish on National daily Newspapers. The message was published by NTP, Nepal in the Gorkhapatra, (a leading and widely circulated newspaper within and outside the county), a National daily newspaper of Nepal on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC presented a paper on “Achievement of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre”.

The Chief Guest distributed the NTP Dixi Daxa & Rana Samundra Awards to the contributors to NTP Nepal for their remarkable contribution. The programme was attended by the representative of JICA, Nepal, NATA, USAID, large number of people from I/NGOs and journalists from electronic and print media.

### **Displaying of Flex and Banners**

STAC prepared number of flex/banners with information about STAC and its activities for TB and HIV/AIDS control in SAARC Member States, which were displayed at the main venue of World TB Day function. The Chief Guest and all visitors observed the information displayed on the flex and acquired different information regarding control of TB in the SAARC Region.

### 3. World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day, designated on December 1 every year since 1988, is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection, and mourning those who have died of the disease. Government and health officials, non-governmental organizations and individuals around the world observe the day, often with education on AIDS prevention and control.

All the World AIDS Day campaigns focus on a specific theme, chosen following consultations with UNAIDS, WHO and National & International agencies involved in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. As of 2008, each year's theme is chosen by the Global Steering Committee of the World AIDS Campaign (WAC).

For each World AIDS Day from 2005 through 2010, the theme was "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise", designed to encourage political leaders to keep their commitment to achieve universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by the year 2010.

As of 2012, the multi-year theme for World AIDS Day is "Getting to Zero: Zero new HIV infections. Zero deaths from AIDS-related illness. Zero discrimination."

The themes are not limited to a single day but are used year-round in international efforts to highlight HIV/AIDS awareness within the context of other major global events.

#### Themes of the World AIDS Day

2015	<b>On the fast track to end AIDS</b>	2006	Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise – Accountability	1997	Children Living in a World with AIDS
2014	Close the gap	2005	Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise	1996	One World. One Hope
2013	Zero Discrimination	2004	Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS	1995	Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities
2012	Together we will end AIDS	2003	Stigma and Discrimination	1994	AIDS and the Family
2011	Getting to Zero	2002	Stigma and Discrimination	1993	Act
2010	Universal Access and Human Rights	2001	I care. Do you?	1992	Community Commitment
2009	Universal Access and Human Rights	2000	AIDS: Men Make a Difference	1991	Sharing the Challenge
2008	Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise – Lead – Empower – Deliver	1999	Listen, Learn, Live: World AIDS Campaign with Children & Young People	1990	Women and AIDS
2007	Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise – Leadership	1998	Force for Change: World AIDS Campaign Young People	1989	Youth
				1988	Communication

## Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2015 by STAC



*(Hon'ble Mr. Ram Janam Chaudhary, Minister, Ministry of Health, Government of Nepal addressing World AIDS Day function held in Kathmandu on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015)*

World AIDS Day 2015 was observed globally every year on 1<sup>st</sup> December with objective to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. “**On the Fast-Track to end AIDS**” was the theme of this year’s World AIDS Day. The Fast-Track approach is an agenda for speeding up the pace of implementation, focus and change at the global, regional, country, province, district and city levels. It involves setting ambitious targets and accelerating the delivery of high-impact HIV prevention and treatment services. It means using innovation to expand services, to better address people’s needs and perspectives and focus on the locations and populations with the highest HIV burden.

STAC commemorated World AIDS Day 2015 by publishing Message of **His Excellency Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General, SAARC**. STAC also placed a hoarding board in its premises to make the people aware on HIV/AIDS. STAC participated in the joint function

organized by National Centre for AIDS & STD Control, Nepal. The Joint function was organized in Nepal Academy Hall, Kathmandu and in the function different dignitaries express their views on situation of HIV/AIDS in World as well as in Nepal. Different organizations working for HIV/AIDS also participated in the function.

Exhibition related to progress on preventing HIV/AIDS and efforts implemented by different National and International NGOs were displayed in the premises of the Nepal Academy by displaying their products, publications and awareness materials etc. A large number of people observed the exhibition and participated in the function.



*(Hoarding Board about HIV/AIDS for public awareness)*

STAC also covered the activities of World AIDS Day 2015 during the programme of the 31<sup>st</sup> Charter Day of SAARC which was organized in its own premises.



*(Participating students of the 31<sup>st</sup> SAARC Charter Day where activities of World AIDS Day 2015 was also covered)*

## 4. Celebration of 31<sup>st</sup> Charter Day of SAARC

On the auspicious occasion of 31<sup>st</sup> Charter Day of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) celebrated the occasion by publishing message of His Excellency Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General, SAARC on its website on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

### Interaction Programme with Students and Teachers on SAARC and its activities in the Region

On this auspicious occasion STAC organized an awareness programme under the title of "Interaction Programme with Students and Teachers on SAARC and its activities in the Region". This programme was organized in STAC on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015. The objective of the programme was to



SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION  
SECRETARIAT

#### MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRTY-FIRST SAARC CHARTER DAY

8 December this year marks the Thirty-first Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

SAARC came into being at the first-ever SAARC Summit held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in December 1985, following a series of brainstorming sessions among the Senior Officials, Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Ministers of its Member States. As defined in its Charter, the principal objectives of the Association are to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated economic cooperation, social progress and cultural development in the region.

SAARC is a regional organization born out of the consciousness that in an increasingly interdependent world, the objectives of peace, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity are best achieved in the South Asian region by fostering mutual understanding, good neighbourly relations and meaningful cooperation among the Member States, which are bound by ties of history and culture. At the same time, our founding Leaders were aware of the common problems, interests and aspirations of the peoples of South Asia and the need for joint action and enhanced cooperation within their respective political and economic systems and cultural traditions. Moreover, they were convinced that regional cooperation among the countries of South Asia is mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary; and that economic, social and technical cooperation among the countries of South Asia would contribute significantly to national and collective self-reliance.

SAARC commenced mutual collaboration in non-controversial areas such as health, communication and postal services at its initial phase as a confidence-building measure among one another. The Association embraced the crucial area of regional economic cooperation in early 1990s, following the conclusion of the SAARC Regional Study on Trade and Manufactures. Areas of regional cooperation continued to grow over the years. SAARC today stands to cater to almost all the spheres of human activity, with the overarching goal of poverty alleviation.

The Association has witnessed eighteen Summit meetings of the Heads of State or Government, with the last one held in Kathmandu under the theme, *Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity*. The Eighteenth Summit Declaration laid emphasis on deepening regional integration for peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia by intensifying cooperation, *inter alia*, in trade, investment, finance, energy, security, infrastructure, connectivity and culture; and to implement projects, programmes and activities in a prioritized, result-oriented and time-bound manner.

As we commemorate the Thirty-first SAARC Charter Day, I would like to extend my warmest felicitations to the peoples and Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

(Arjun B. Thapa)  
Secretary-General

Kathmandu, 8 December 2015

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(Message from H.E. Secretary General of SAARC)



(Participants of the Interaction Programme)

celebrate SAARC Charter Day by providing information about SAARC, its introduction, objective, functions, importance etc. to the students and teachers.

Over 80 students and teachers from Chanakya College, Bhaktapur and staff of the NTP Nepal participated in the programme.

Mr. Narayan Prasad Dahal, Act. Director, NTP, Nepal, Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director, NCASC Nepal, Dr. Pramod Bhattarai, MO, NTC and Mr. Basuki Raj Regmi, Principal, Chanakya College, Bhaktapur, Nepal attended the programme.

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC welcomed the guests, participants and other invitees in the programme. He highlighted the SAARC, its background, objective, functions etc. He explained the need of an interaction programme and importance of celebrating the Charter day of SAARC. Dr. Verma also explained about SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), its goal, vision, mission, objective function, achievements, etc.

On behalf of STAC, Research Officer presented a presentation on “Status of TB and HIV/AIDS in the SAARC Region”.

Dr. Pramod Bhattarai, Medical Officer, NTP Nepal presented presentation on general information on TB, its control and treatment. He also highlighted the achievements of National TB Control Programme (NTP), available services under NTP etc.

Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director, National Centre for AIDS and SDT Control, Nepal highlighted about HIV and AIDS, its symptoms, preventive aspects, awareness, education and knowledge. He also highlighted the current progress of National AIDS Control Programme and available services in Nepal.

An interaction session was held after completion of the presentations. Students asked different questions on TB and HIV/AIDS, which were answered by Dr. Verma, Dr. Bhattarai and Dr. Singh.

Mr. Basuki Raj Regmi, Principal, Chanakya H. S. School, Bhaktapur shared his experiences regarding the communicable diseases like TB and HIV/AIDS with the participants and officials. He thanked Director STAC for inviting them to participate in the programme which is highly knowledgeable, informative and important to the students of Higher School level.

At the end of the programme, Director, STAC delivered closing remarks. In his remarks he mentioned that students are the next edition of the community, so they have to be informed properly about their health. He also added that the voice of children are listened by parents because nowadays children are more directives due to advance technology such as internet,

different books and publications. They are regularly updating their knowledge and enthusiastic to make them up-to-date. Dr. Verma thanked all guests, participants and staff for their presence in the programme.

STAC utilized this opportunity to propagate the World AIDS Day 2015, which was observed on 1<sup>st</sup> December. It was very necessary to impart the basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS to young people in the community because they are considered as vulnerable group for HIV/AIDS. Sufficient information on available services in Nepal and preventable measures had been explained by the Director of National Centre for AIDS and SDT Control, Government of Nepal, which is not talked about in their text book.



## 5. Conferment of SAARC Prize on Tuberculosis – 2015

The aim of the prize is to honour citizen/s or organizations of South Asia for their exemplary work towards control and prevention of Tuberculosis in the SAARC Region.

The Twenty-fifth meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) has decided to honour SAARC Prize on Tuberculosis – 2015 to Ms. Shameema Hussain of Maldives for her remarkable contributions in control of Tuberculosis, who while working for TB control programme of Maldives for 37 years has contributed also in promoting awareness and reducing stigma and discrimination.



Ms. Shameema started her work in the field of public health in 1967 and retired in 2009 from the service as Deputy Director General of TB Control Programme, Maldives.

## 6. Research Programme:

**STAC Regional Grant Integrated Biological and Behavioural Survey (IBBS) of Most at Risk Population at HIV/AIDS in Maldives.**

The research work has been initiated in Maldives and the final report is being awaited.

## 7. Sharing of Information and New Findings:

**Presentation and Dissemination of Research Findings on TB & HIV/AIDS through participation in International Conferences as well as in Regional Conferences (in Member States)**

### **Participation in different Meetings**

At the invitation of the Government of India, Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director along with the Research Officer and Epidemiologist of the Centre participated in the following meetings organized from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015 in New Delhi, India.

- Fifth Meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities
- Seventh Meeting of the SAARC Expert Group on HIV/AIDS
- Meeting of the Senior Officials

Director, STAC also participated in the Fifth Meeting of SAARC Health Ministers, New Delhi, India on 8 April, 2015

The meeting deliberated and provided guidance and a roadmap for strengthening collaboration among SAARC Member States on a number of issues and challenges faced by these countries. Some of the prominent health issues discussed which included prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, disease surveillance network, health infrastructure, human resources for health, immunization for vaccine preventable diseases, HIV/AIDS, mental health, improving access to medicines and anti-microbial resistance etc.

Director, STAC was involved in a Joint Monitoring Mission (JMM) to review the India's Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP) conducted by the Government of India, World Health Organization (WHO) and other technical & donor partners from 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2015. STAC is always there to support the international review of the NTPs in Member States upon their request.

STAC participated in the Regional Workshop on combating Drug Resistant TB, held in Bangkok, from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2015 organized by WHO/SEARO.

### **Participation in Regional Consultation Meeting on HIV and Universal Health Coverage (UHC):**

Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Nepal participated in a consultation meeting organized by WHO/SEARO, New Delhi from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015.

Recognizing the need for a framework to address the HIV epidemic in the context of universal health coverage and post - 2015 sustainable development agenda, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for South - East Asia convened a meeting for Member States.

The key objectives of the meeting were to discuss the contribution of the HIV



response to UHC and the opportunities to use the UHC framework in strengthening the HIV response that will set the course for ending the HIV epidemic in the South-East Asia region by 2030. SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre as WHO collaborative centre has also an important role in the control of HIV/AIDS in the region.

The meeting was participated by the different partner agencies of WHO along with the National HIV Programme Managers and National Health Planning or UHC focal points from all 11 Member States. In addition, an expert representing the PLHIV communities and their contribution to the HIV response from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar and Thailand were also invited. The meeting developed regional framework for ending AIDS in the context of UHC in the WHO South-East Asia Region.

## **Regional partners meeting on Adolescents**

SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre assigned Research Officer to participate in the Regional partners' Meeting on HIV and AIDS among Young Key Affected Populations in South Asia held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 organized by UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. The objective of the meeting was to bring together national counterparts, key stakeholders and UN colleagues to take forward the ALL IN Agenda and catalyze efforts around ending the AIDS epidemic among adolescents in South Asia.

A three day meeting was designed to be participatory and interactive. This was achieved by including a range of facilitation methods over the course of the meeting including plenary sessions, group work, presentations and facilitated discussions. Around 50 participants attended this meeting, representing Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan along with the representatives from SAARC, civil society, youth and UN agencies.

## **Participation in IAS 2015, Vancouver, Canada**

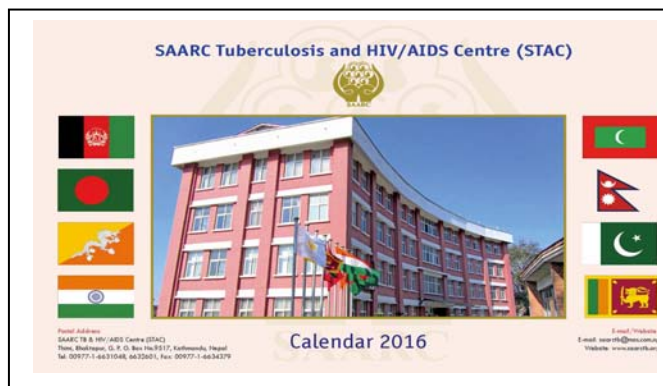
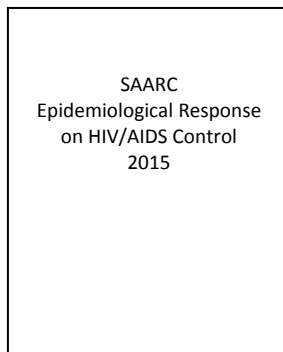
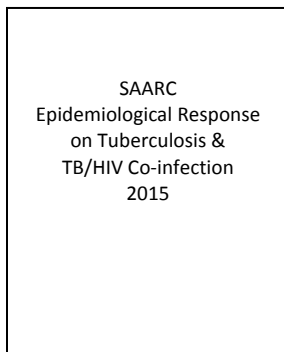
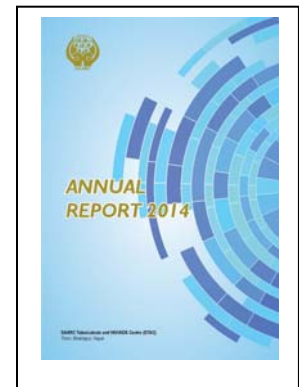
Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC participated in the 8th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention at the Vancouver Convention Centre held from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada with objective to share

the experiences with the international communities. Dr. Verma shared the experiences and challenges revealed during the implementation of the HIV and AIDS programme in the SAARC Region with the international HIV/AIDS experts attending the conference.



## 8. Publication and Distribution

STAC publications contains reports on activities, updated information on TB and HIV/AIDS, articles related to TB, HIV/AIDS and Lung Diseases on new findings, case reports, etc. news on TB and HIV/AIDS along with the information on related matters of the SAARC Member States of the concerned year. These publications are distributed to the SAARC Member States, experts and concerned international agencies, such as WHO, UNAIDS etc. Almost all publications are uploaded on STAC website ([www.saarctb.org](http://www.saarctb.org)) which can be downloaded freely for non commercial purpose.

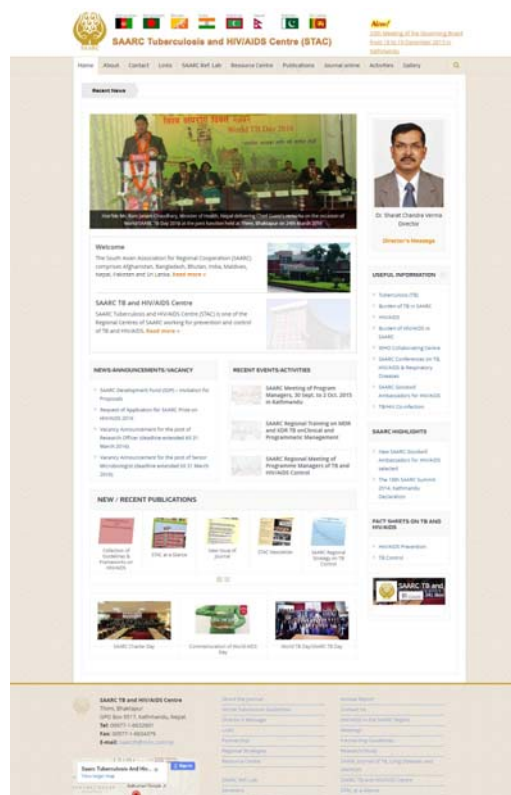


Publication under process of printing:

- Report of Twelfth Round Proficiency Test
- SAARC Epidemiological Response on TB and HIV/AIDS 2015 (both)

## 9. Dissemination of Information on TB, HIV and AIDS by updating STAC Website (www.saarctb.org)

An official website of STAC is available in internet under the web address, of www.saarctb.org. On this website recent information about TB control, HIV prevention, information on programmatic management, informative articles, news & announcement of the Centre, support to other SAARC Regional Centres by publishing the information upon their request, uploaded publications of STAC etc. are being published. Periodically and timely updating for the purpose of giving updated information has been done. Timely modification is being done to make the website more users' friendly, compatible to almost all web browsers used in internet browsing. A simple and user friendly online submission system of articles is being also managed.



## 10. Resource Centre for TB and HIV/AIDS (STAC Library)

This is a specialized library for TB and HIV/AIDS. Available books, journals, newspapers, reports, dissertations, audio-visual materials related to TB and HIV/AIDS have been collected and computerized for the use of people. This library is in the process of being developed as e-library.

## 11. Visit of different dignitaries to STAC

### Observation visit of dignitaries from MoFA, Government of Nepal

Mr. Ramesh Prasad Khanal, Joint Secretary, and Ms. Rita Dhital, Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal visited SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre on 1st April 2015. The discussion was held with the Director, STAC on the development of the Centre, its activities and future programmes. They observed the functioning, infrastructure and facilities of the Centre.

## **Observation of STAC from High Level Dignitaries from Embassy of India, Kathmandu**

A team of Senior Diplomats, Mr. Vinay Kumar, Deputy Chief of Mission and Mr. Gyanveer Singh, SS (EC), from the Embassy of India in Kathmandu, visited SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and observed the functioning of the Centre as well as infrastructure for SAARC Supranational Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS. Dr. Sharat Chandra Verma, Director, STAC briefed the vision, mission, progress and the future programme of the Centre.

## **Observation visit of STAC by Members of SAARC Programming Committee**

Mr. Dinkar Asthana, Joint Secretary and Mr. S. R. Patnaik, Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of India visited SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal on 23 December 2015. Both of the dignitaries observed the functioning of the Centre by visiting the Laboratory, Library and office rooms. The team obtained the information regarding SAARC TB Reference Laboratory which is upgrading as SAARC Supra-national Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS. Both the dignitaries expressed their view and wished for fulfilling the mission of serving the people of SAARC by establishing SAARC Supra-national Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS.

## **12. Audit of Accounts of STAC for the year 2014**

A joint audit team (JAT 14) for the year 2014 comprising auditors Mr. Baikuntha Bahadur Adhikari, Director, Office of the Auditor General, Kathmandu, Nepal and Mr. Tahir Kamal, Director General, Office of the Auditor General of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan carried out the audit of the accounts and operations on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015 of the SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal for the period of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

## **Activities could not be carried out in the year 2015**

1. SAARC Regional Training on Risk Communication on DR-TB and Parents to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS
2. SAARC Regional TOT on Line Probe Assay and Genxpert for diagnosis of patients at risk of MDR-TB
3. SAARC Regional Parliamentarian's Meet on MDG -6 (Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS)
4. Building SAARC Regional Capacity on Epidemiology and Surveillance on DR-TB
5. Visit of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador/s in Pakistan/Maldives
6. Visit of SAARC Goodwill Ambassador/s in Sri-Lanka/Nepal
7. Technical Assistant provided to NTP/NACP of Member States.

### **Research**

8. Research on support to diagnostic and management service in difficult to reach population in Afghanistan and Bhutan/Nepal
9. Research Grant to support National TB and HIV /AIDS in priority areas:

### **Publication**

9. A Hand Book of Abbreviations/Acronyms used in TB & HIV/AIDS Control Programmes

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