

# MIGRATION AND TUBERCULOSIS

## CROSS BORDER TB CONTROL AND CARE IN CENTRAL ASIAN REGION



### Joint press release

### Issues of cross-border tuberculosis control in Central Asian countries discussed at the third high-level regional meeting in Astana

The third high-level regional meeting on “Migration and Tuberculosis: Cross-border TB Control and Care in the Central Asian Region” was held in Astana on December 6 and December 7, 2017. Representatives of government agencies, national TB programs and migration authorities from Central Asia, experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), the STOP TB Partnership, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as representatives of civil society participated in this event organized by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Project HOPE; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund); and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The meeting was organized within the framework of the Comprehensive Plan to Fight TB in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014-2020 and the Program “Addressing Cross-border Control of TB, MDR/XDR-TB and TB/HIV among Labor Migrants in the Republic of Kazakhstan.” The first and second meetings in this format were held in November 2015 and December 2016 to develop mechanisms for regional coordination and collaboration on TB diagnosis and treatment. The purpose of the 3rd high-level meeting was to review the performance of the Action Plan/Roadmap for the second year and further steps as part of the implementation of the WHO “End TB Strategy.”

“The comprehensive plan to fight TB in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014-2020 provides for measures to improve TB services for migrants and to initiate a regional dialogue on this issue with neighboring countries in Central Asia. I would like to point out that the dialogue takes place on a mutually beneficial basis and in the interest of all parties. The signing of bilateral agreements is important for effective regional cooperation on cross-border control, prevention and care of TB in the region,” noted Laura Akhmetniyazova, Director, Republic of Kazakhstan Ministry of Health Department of Medical Care Organization.

“Tuberculosis knows no borders. Migrants represent a population group that is vulnerable to TB. To address this challenge successfully we need to build a partnership among the countries,” noted U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan George Krol.



“Kazakhstan is one of the countries that pay much attention to the fight against TB and has become a regional leader in the cross-border control of this disease. The Comprehensive Plan to Fight TB in Kazakhstan provides not only for activities to improve access to TB diagnosis and treatment for labor migrants, but also aims to establish a regional dialogue on this issue. Since December 2014, Project HOPE, with the Global Fund’s financial support, has been implementing a program to support the Comprehensive Plan to Combat Tuberculosis in Kazakhstan. I would like to emphasize that much has been accomplished already with the support of the Ministry of Health and national partners. An effective dialogue between the countries of the region is now in place, and the upcoming execution of the bilateral agreements on cross-border control of TB will enable the implementation of the long-term mechanisms in the fight against TB in the region,” noted Mariam Sianozova, Project HOPE’s Senior Regional Director for Europe and Eurasia.

The meeting’s plenary sessions addressed the implementation of TB control among migrants under the Comprehensive Plan to Fight TB in Kazakhstan, the Action Plan for the next year, the results of the external evaluation of the program “Addressing Cross-border Control of TB, MDR/XDR-TB and TB/HIV among Labor Migrants in the Republic of Kazakhstan,” as well as recommendations for the future. Expert advisors commented on the results of the activities on cross-border TB control in the region and offered their vision for further steps.

The working group meetings addressed the improvement of access to health services for migrants and intersectoral interaction and coordination of the activities of the government TB control agencies and civil society. The resolution of the meeting summarizes recommendations for further work on cross-border control of TB.

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