

Minutes of Meeting № 4/25-31
of the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria
in the Republic of Tajikistan (NCC)

20 December 2022

Dushanbe

Chaired by:

Matlubakhon Amonzoda Sattoriyon, Vice Prime Minister of the
Republic of Tajikistan, Chairwoman, National Coordination Committee

Participants (23 members of the NCC):

G. Abdufattohzoda - Head of the Social Development Department of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, A.A. Amirzoda - Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Population, Chief State Sanitary Doctor of the Republic of Tajikistan, N.R. Mahmaddullozoda - Deputy Minister of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, Z.N. Abdulzoda - Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, N. Ibrohimzoda - Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, M. Huseinzoda - Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, R.S. Safarzoda - Deputy Minister of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan, Z. Abdulmainzoda - Deputy Chairwoman of the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Sh.K. Rahimzoda - First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Youth and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, D. Rustamzoda - Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Television and Radio under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, A. Vahobzoda - Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Religion, Streamlining Traditions, Celebrations and Rites under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Lenny Montiel - UNDP Resident Representative in the Republic of Tajikistan, A. Safarov - Officer of the Office of the World Health Organization in the Republic of Tajikistan, James Parys - Acting Director of the USAID Mission in the Republic of Tajikistan, T. Haydarova - Director of the public organization "Tajikistan Network of Women Living with HIV ", F. Gulova - director of the public organization "Equal Opportunities", S. Naimov - director of the Association "Partnership to Stop Tuberculosis in Tajikistan", D. Egamberdieva - director of the public organization "Buzurg" and G. Karimova - director of the public organization "Zuhal", Z.T. Avgonov - Executive Secretary of the NCC.

Not participated (2 NCC members):

R.Kh. Nasriddinzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, M. Azizmamadov, Director of the public organization "Volunteer" (reasons are unknown).

Invited participants:

G.M. Mukhsinzoda - First Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, A. Mahmudzoda - Deputy Head of the Main Department for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan, I. Abdulhabibzoda - Officer of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan, L. Yuldasheva - Acting Director, Department of Health Programs USAID Mission in the Republic of Tajikistan, Sona Orbelyan - Project Manager, HIV/AIDS and TB Prevention and Control Program, United Nations Development Program in Tajikistan, R. Nurov - Director of the State Institution "Republican TB Control Center" of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic Tajikistan, A. Soliev - Deputy Director, State Institution "Republican Center for the Prevention and Control of AIDS of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, O. Nasibov - Assistant to Executive Secretary, NCC Secretariat Tajikistan.

Agenda:

1. Progress of the implementation of the National Program for the Protection of the Population from TB in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025.
2. Progress of the implementation of the National Program to respond to HIV/AIDS epidemics in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025.
3. Presentation of the 2023 Work plan of the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan.
4. Presentation of the 2023 Work plan of the NCC Oversight Commission.

Ms. M.A.Sattoriyon, Vice Prime Minister opened the meeting of the National Coordinating Committee, expressed her gratitude and respect to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other partners, including USAID and WHO, for their continuous support in the implementation of national programs to prevent and control HIV/AIDS and TB in the Republic of Tajikistan. She has mentioned about receiving the notification letter from the Global Fund on December 16, 2022 on the allocation of next cycle funding for the Republic of Tajikistan to fight HIV/AIDS and TB and health resilient and sustainable systems in the total amount of USD25,964,147 for the period 2024-2026, the letter was disseminated to all members of the NCC.

Mr. A. Amirzoda suggested to include issue No 5 on Approval of Split of Funds between HIV and TB programs, allocated by the GF for the Republic of Tajikistan to fight HIV and TB in 2024-2026. The suggestion

was accepted by all NCC members and the Agenda presented and proposed by A. Amirzoda was approved.

The Vice Prime Minister noted that according to paragraph 5.1 “Rules and procedures for resolving conflicts of interest”, approved by the decision of the National Coordinating Committee dated 10.07.2012, No. 21, once a year, all elected members of the NCC and employees of the Secretariat of the NCC are required to fill out and sign the Consent Form per the rules and procedures of resolving conflicts of interest” (Appendix No. 1). All NCC members were requested to sign and submit the Consent Form to the NCC Secretariat. Ms. Chairwoman also said that in the event of a real or potential conflict of interest among the members of the NCC on any issues of the agenda, they need to declare this to NCC and fill out the Declaration of Interest, in accordance with the form attached to the above Rules (Appendix No. 2 to Rules) and leave the meeting room during the discussion and decision-making on any issue on the agenda.

First issue of the agenda - D. Rustamzoda, Deputy Head of the Committee on Television and Radio under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, presented information “On the implementation of the National Program for the Protection of the Population from TB in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025”. She mentioned that in order to implement this Program, the Committee on Television and Radio under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan developed and broadcasted number of news stories and programs via state television and radio channels. In addition various social videos, information and educational stories and reports, interviews and comments, as well as analytical programs were broadcasted via TV Tojikiston channel as following: “Ru bar u bo mutakhasis (Face to Face with Expert)”, “Tibbi Toliq (All about Medicine)”, “Tartib (Procedures)”, “Darmonbakhsh (Healer)” and “Yak ruzi tabib (A day of a doctor)”.

Tibbi Tojik Program with presentations on communicable, non-communicable and other types of diseases with the participation of health experts were periodically presented to viewers. The Tibbi Tojik Program in particular was dedicated to TB, where specialists from the city TB Control Center in Dushanbe had interviews and shared with key TB messages. The programs provided information from specialists on the causes of infection diseases, symptoms, methods of prevention and their correct treatment. In 2022, in order to highlight the issues of HIV / AIDS and TB prevention, 5 TV programs were televised with participation of experts from the relevant structures of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan. She has also added that the Television Committee is proactively cooperating with other ministries and departments in the frame of the implementation of the National TB Program.

Ms. Sattoriyon, the Vice Prime Minister mentioned that paragraph 94 of the Implementation Plan of the National Program for the Protection of the Population from TB in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025 envisages the broadcasting of national and international events on TB prevention in the Republic of Tajikistan via state television and radio channels. Every year on March 24, World TB Day is celebrated around the world to draw public attention to the TB problem. She has emphasized the need for the Committee on Television and Radio to cover national and international events on the TB prevention to ensure covering the issue of TB prevention through non-state television channels.

Dr. G.M. Muhsinzoda proposed to initiate widely awareness raising activities on TB prevention and treatment for the population, elimination of stigma and discrimination of the people affected by the disease.

Dr. A. Soliev said it is necessary to provide information about early TB screening through TV and radio for newlyweds.

Next on the first issue of the agenda, Z. Abdulzoda, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, presented information “On the implementation of the National Program for the Protection of the Population from TB in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025”. He mentioned that the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan has implemented a number of activities on the prevention of all viruses and diseases among children, schoolchildren, students and teachers in line with the National Program for the Protection of the Population from Tuberculosis in the Republic of Tajikistan and Plan for 2021-2025, and the relevant instructions of H.E. Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Leader of the Nation. In particular, the Action Plan was endorsed by the Minister, Ministry of Education and Science. In addition, a joint Action Plan was adopted with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Healthy Lifestyle Center under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, the Committee on Youth and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Committee on Television and Radio under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The program "Healthy Lifestyle" was developed which was introduced in educational hours from the 1st to the 11th grades of all general education schools. Education activities on a healthy lifestyle was conducted 5 hours a week (total 20 hours) in the primary grades for grades 1-4 and for grades 5-9 and 8 hours a week (total 56 hours) for 10-11 grades. Healthy lifestyle lessons are held within educational hours and are distributed by proportion to the classes. The class teachers are responsible for their implementation. Educational and methodological materials have been created taking into account national traditions, socio-cultural, age, and gender characteristics of the target audience. Effective disease prevention programs have been developed for general education schools, vocational and higher educational

institutions. In all schools, various events have been held with the participation of representatives of the health system on the following topics: HIV / AIDS prevention, drug addiction, various virus diseases, and how to protect yourself from TB and malaria. Surveys and discussions about the prevention of infectious diseases among students are being conducted in all schools. A questionnaire was used by students on the transmission of infection with HIV / AIDS, TB and malaria. An essay competition on the topic “HIV/AIDS+ tuberculosis” has been announced. The issue related to lack of schoolbooks on healthy lifestyles for students was mentioned by the presenter.

Second issue on the agenda, Ms. Sh, Rakhimzoda, First Deputy Head of the Committee for Youth and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, reported on the progress of activities of the National Program to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025 implemented by the Committee on Youth Affairs and sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. She mentioned that the Committee on Youth and Sports Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, took the necessary actions per paragraphs 121, 122 and 123 of the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Program to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025. In particular, in frame of the Joint Action Plan developed jointly with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the prevention of infectious diseases among adolescents and youth the Committee has conducted various educational, informational, awareness raising and consulting activities in the form of workshops, trainings, conferences, round tables, educational and sports campaigns and recreational activities among adolescents and youth. In 2021, with the initiative of the Committee, meetings and explanatory work were held to promote a healthy lifestyle, reduce the impact of sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS and other communicable and most hazardous diseases among adolescents and youth using the “Political Readings” method for young people of age 14-16 and their parents and youth higher of age 17 and their parents on the basis of general educational institutions by the method "faculty to faculty" among students of universities in Dushanbe. In total 55 political readings took place covering 8364 young people aged 14 to 16 and 17 to 18 years old in general education schools, lyceums and gymnasiums in Dushanbe. Number of cultural, educational events and promotional events were conducted as information and educational meetings, educational forums, music, questions and answers, distribution of leaflets under the slogan "Healthy family - healthy society", "Healthy lifestyle is our choice!", "Health Wealth of the Nation”, “Protect Yourself from AIDS!”, “Health of Society - Health of Our Youth”, “Youth Against Infectious Diseases!” and a round table was held on the “Peer to Peer” method in connection with the

promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the prevention of young people from undesirable and dangerous phenomena of modern society, as well as information campaigns were held in Dushanbe on the prevention of HIV / AIDS, drug addiction, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases. During the campaigns, more than 2,500 flyers were handed out to population of the capital city, especially young people, various sports and mass events were held to promote a healthy lifestyle, creating conditions for increasing youth sports activity, as well as advertising campaigns related to the prevention of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. In general, aiming at effective implementation of the priority focus in 2021 as the result in total 4540 activities conducted covering 841699 population, teenagers and youth and 77090 IEC materials disseminated during the activities.

It was highlighted by the NCC Chairwoman that despite the HIV/AIDS prevention activities done by the Committee on Youth and Sport, however more efforts should be undertaken to increase HIV/AIDS awareness of the youth. According to the assessment results conducted in 2015 the level of HIV/AIDS awareness of the youth of age 15-24 reached 94%. However, another study conducted by the Republican AIDS prevention and control center in 2020 showed that the awareness level reduced to 87,5%.

Dr. A.Soliev has mentioned that according to the statistics more than 80% people living with HIV were detected in the age 20-39 (labor and reproductive age), and the majority of cases are people who were at least once in labor migration outside the country. He also added that the HIV risky behavior of youth is worsened, the youth awareness level on HIV/AIDS has reduced. He suggested conducting a study to assess the access of HIV/AIDS information for youth and expressed readiness to support in this direction.

F. Gulova has mentioned that the City HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Center in Dushanbe has launched the website (<https://hivtest.tj>), where saliva rapid HIV tests are available and can be get free of charge and anonymously. She has requested the Committee on Youth and Sport to forward this message to the youth of the country and collaborate in this direction and expressed the readiness of the NGO Equal Opportunities and City HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Center in Dushanbe to support the Committee on this issue.

On the third issue of the agenda, Mr. Z. Avgonov informed that in line with the paragraph 16 of the Regulations on the National Coordinating Committee, the NCC Secretariat has developed draft NCC Work Plan for 2023, which was earlier submitted for consideration of the NCC members. He asked the members of the NCC to review and approve the Plan.

On the fourth issue of the agenda, Dr. Z. Avgonov has noted that in line with the paragraph 6, Annex 1 of the Oversight Plan approved by the decision of the NCC dated July 10, 2012, No. 21, the Secretariat of the NCC

has developed a draft Work Plan of the Oversight Commission for 2023, which was also earlier submitted for consideration of the NCC members. He asked the members of the NCC to review and approve the 2023 Work Plan of the Oversight Commission.

On the fifth issue, Dr. A. Amirzoda said that based on the decision of the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, endorsed in November 2022, in total the amount of USD 25,964,147 was allocated to Tajikistan, of which USD 15,437,432 for HIV component and USD 10,526,715 for TB component. He added that the notification letter on the allocation of funds to the Republic of Tajikistan dated December 16, 2022 was received from the Global Fund and the same day was disseminated to all NCC members. The amounts allocated to all countries were determined in accordance with a methodology approved by the Global Fund Board, based primarily on the severity of disease burden and income levels. He emphasized that the Global Fund proposed an indicative scheme for the distribution of funds between programs that is USD 15,437,432 US for the HIV and USD 10,526,715 for TB component. As per the Global Fund letter dated December 16, 2022, the NCC may agree to the grant sharing proposed by the Global Fund or propose a revised allocation scheme based on a scientifically sound analysis of programmatic and systemic gaps and taking into account the funding needed to support major programs. He has asked the members of the NCC to consider the allocation split of resources between programs proposed by the Global Fund. He noted that working groups have been established under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan to develop new fund request to support fighting the HIV/AIDS and TB.

James Parys said about his concerns that according to the Global Fund letter, funds allocated for TB control for the period 2024-2026 (US 10,526,715) compare to funds of previous grant allocated for the period 2021-2023 are less for USD 227,778 (US 10,754,493). He said that USAID is one of the leading partners that invests in the TB prevention and control in the Republic of Tajikistan and is making every effort to support the country in development of the Fund Request through providing technical assistance in hiring consultants to carry out this work.

Sona Orbelyan mentioned that in addition to the amount indicated in the letter of the Global Fund dated December 16, 2022 on the allocation to the Republic of Tajikistan to fight HIV/AIDS and TB (USD 25,964,147) for the period 2024-2026, the country can also develop and submit request for additional funding (PAAR) to the Global Fund together with main Fund Request. She suggested using this opportunity to develop PAAR and include the activities that would not be covered in the main Fund Request.

NCC members made following decisions in the meeting:

1. Take into consideration the report of the TV and Radio Committee under the Government of Tajikistan on progress of implementation of the National TB control Program in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025.

2. Take into consideration the report of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan on progress of implementation of the National TB control Program in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025.

3. Take into consideration the report of the Committee on Youth and Sport under the Government of Tajikistan on progress of implementation of the National Program to respond to HIV/AIDS epidemics in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025.

4. To the Youth and Sport Committee under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in collaboration with Republican HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Center to carry out joint activities and strengthen increased HIV/AIDS prevention awareness raising activities for youth.

4. To approve 2023 Work Plan of the National Coordination Committee to fight AIDS, TB and malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan.

5. To approve 2023 Oversight Commission Work Plan of the National Coordination Committee to fight AIDS, TB and malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Vice Prime Minister,
NCC Chairwomen

M.A. Sattoriyon