

WHO CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE ON TB



Engagement with civil society
as a driver for change



Progress report,
March 2020-June 2021



World Health
Organization

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FOREWORD

“It is essential that civil society is front-and-center in building back better and ensuring greater equity and resilience in health systems, communities and economies.”

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,
WHO Director-General



After more than two years of hard work, in 2020, despite disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the level of Task Force engagement has been astonishing, adapting very quickly to the changing context. The Task Force continued to actively contribute to the development of WHO tuberculosis (TB) policies, catalyzing growing collaboration between civil society organizations, national TB programmes, and WHO, as well as engaging in advocacy at the highest levels.

Last year was hard for all of us, around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health. The economic and social disruptions caused by the pandemic are devastating. Tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty and the number of undernourished people has increased. Progress made in recent years on ending the TB epidemic has been reversed by COVID-19. New policies in response to the pandemic, particularly lockdowns and reassignments of health staff and equipment, severely impacted essential TB services in most affected countries in 2020. Now more than ever, as we shape a new post-coronavirus world, we need affected communities and civil society to come together to accelerate efforts to end TB and recover from the health and non-health effects of the pandemic.

During these pressing times, the Task Force voices at the civil society webinars convened by the WHO Director-General in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic were highly pertinent. The WHO Civil Society Task Force was also one of the key contributors to the WHO note “COVID-19: Considerations for tuberculosis (TB) care”. Furthermore, the Task Force provided the community perspective during the launch of the Global TB Report at the end of 2020, highlighting the disruptions in TB services caused by COVID-19.

Since early 2020 to date, the Task Force continued its systematic engagement in high-level events and advocacy. All members closely collaborated to frame their priorities and identify unified messaging. They effectively highlighted the communities’ concerns, bringing forward voices of TB survivors and affected communities. “At the STAG-TB meeting in 2020, Task Force raised concerns and highlighted needs of closer collaboration between civil society and the governments; called for faster adoption of all-oral regimens for

multi-drug resistant TB treatment, especially in the COVID-19 context; and stressed the importance of multisectoral action in TB response. One of the key highlights of 2020 was the Task Force participation in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly side event “Progress and Multisectoral Action towards achieving global targets to end TB”, with a passionate appeal. A related prominent milestone was securing Task Force input to the UN Secretary General’s report on the progress towards achieving global tuberculosis targets and implementing the UN Political Declaration on Tuberculosis, to ensure civil society views were reflected in the report.

It was my pleasure to see the Task Force members in the WHO- convened World TB Day 2021 event. Shortly after, in a meeting in April 2021, Dr Tedros, WHO TB representatives from regional and country offices, and the Global Tuberculosis Programme, engaged in an open dialogue with the Task Force to discuss priorities and agree on next steps. This resulted in a joint statement by WHO Director-General and the Task Force, calling for urgent action to stop preventable deaths and suffering due to TB and recover gains lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moving ahead, WHO will continue to improve its efforts and promote adequate resources and commitment to reach the common goal of ending TB, with civil society as a close partner and supporting the Task Force as a catalyst of change through mutual trust.

I also take the opportunity to say farewell to Nandita Venkatesan and Ahn Tuan Nguyen, and sincerely thank them for their commitment and contributions. I warmly welcome the newly appointment members, Aneeta Pasha, Chamreun Sok Choub, Fatima Karmadwala, Paran Winarni and Tenzin Kunor, to the Task Force.



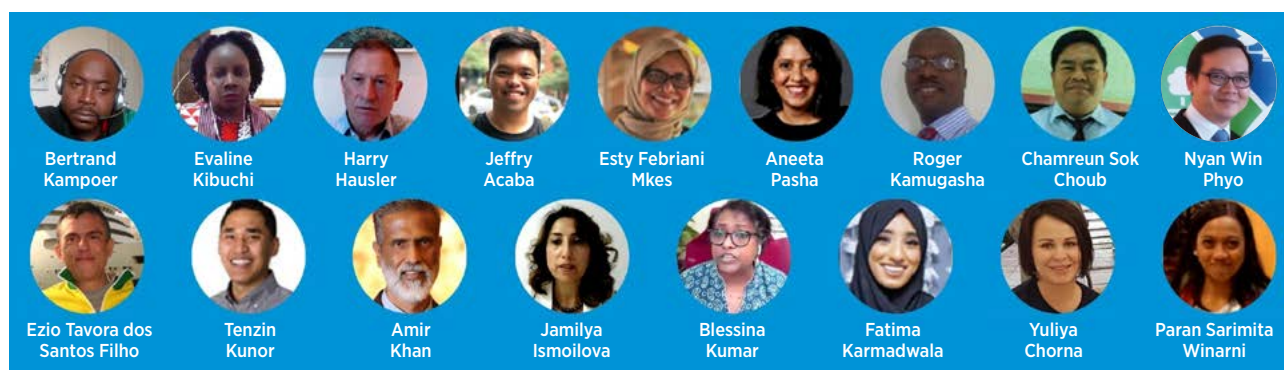
Dr Tereza Kasaeva
Director, Global TB Programme
World Health Organization

ABOUT THE WHO CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE ON TB

The WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB provides a platform for discussion and exchange with WHO, building on the commitment of the Director-General, with an emphasis on harnessing the untapped potential for engagement with civil society and affected communities at all levels.

Following commitments made by Heads of State at the Force aims to strengthen collaboration and accelerate first-ever UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on the progress towards ending TB. The renewed activity of the Fight Against Tuberculosis in September 2018, the role of Task Force is a culmination of the commitment made by the civil society in driving action and accountability is more WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, important than ever. The Political Declaration of the UN to

strengthen civil society engagement, as discussed at High-level Meeting on TB and the WHO End TB Strategy several consultations with civil society representatives, both call for prioritizing the strong and meaningful starting with the First WHO Global Ministerial Conference engagement of civil society and affected communities in on Ending TB, in 2017.



The Task Force mandate runs from January 2019 to December 2022. Its original mandate was until December 2020. The end date was subsequently extended to December 2022, due to the particular context related to the COVID-19 pandemic we are in.

The Task Force seeks to emphasize key action to drive stronger civil society engagement in efforts to End TB, including:

- ▶ translating into practice WHO TB policies, including the End TB Strategy, into practice by mainstreaming voices of communities affected by TB and their networks at global, regional and country levels;
- ▶ catalysing greater collaboration between civil society organizations, national TB programmes and WHO at all levels in all activities and projects in pursuit of improved TB outcomes, including meaningful engagement of civil society and affected communities in policy development;
- ▶ contributing to the implementation of WHO TB policies, with a particular focus on multisectoral action for social protection and universal health coverage and advocating for their inclusion in national TB strategies and plans, national social programmes and political platforms (such as parliaments) and regional and global platforms for policy dialogue;
- ▶ promoting and nurturing strong and effective links between community-based actors and national TB programmes or their equivalents, as well as promoting demand for TB prevention, diagnosis, care and treatment services;
- ▶ developing a framework for monitoring and evaluating collaboration among civil society organizations, national TB programmes and WHO at all levels;
- ▶ promoting capacity-building for civil society members and representatives of communities affected by TB to intensify information-sharing, dialogue and consultation on the implementation of WHO TB policies and norms;
- ▶ advocating for increased domestic funding and donor commitments for TB response at all levels.

The Task Force has seventeen* civil society members. They were selected with input from an independent selection panel. Selection was based on assessments of individual competencies and experiences, and the process aimed to balance geography, gender and the diversity of communities and civil society representatives.

* Three civil society members stepped down from the Task Force after its inception; five new members have been appointed.

MEET THE TASK FORCE CIVIL SOCIETY MEMBERS AND THE SECRETARIAT



CANADA

YULIYA CHORNA

- ▶ Regional advocacy
- ▶ Boosting political and financial commitments
- ▶ Multisectoral engagement

To end TB, we urgently need to unite efforts by all sectors, beyond the health sector alone, to address the risk factors and social determinants of TB. Only by making ending TB an all-of-government and all-of-society priority will we be able to catch up with the progress lost due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society and TB-affected communities should be at the centre of TB response, both in providing psychosocial and peer support and as catalysts for change. The Task Force gives us a platform for dialogue with WHO leadership, through which we can share knowledge and collaborate to co-create a vision to influence policies and practice for rights-based and people-centered TB care.



USA

TENZIN KUNOR

- ▶ Diversity and equity
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Peer mentorship and patient support

The Task Force engages in the critical work of uplifting the voices of TB survivors and affected communities and utilizes this insight to create and meaningfully inform change. Building solidarity and bringing the experiences of those at the margins to the centre is crucial in our work towards a world without TB.



BRAZIL 

EZIO TAVORA DOS SANTOS FILHO

- ▶ Research
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Building partnerships

COVID-19 has given the best example of how different sectors can engage in a strong response for an emergency, and how crucial health systems are. Implementation of MAF-TB is the right strategy to tackle increasing poverty in a synergistic manner. Strengthening civil society participation for universal health coverage is essential.

 TB high-burden country



UNITED KINGDOM

FATIMA KARMADWALA

- ▶ Multi-drug resistant TB survivor
- ▶ TB advocate
- ▶ Affected community lead for the UK Academics & Professionals for TB (UKAPT)

The Task Force provides a large partnership forum which allows affected communities from all geographical areas to have an input into changing the future for TB patients. Having this voice will hopefully bring us one step closer to ending TB.



TAJIKISTAN

JAMILYA ISMOILOVA

- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Boosting community engagement in the region
- ▶ Community, Rights and Gender

If you don't consider TB to be something very worrying for our global family, then that is sad. Humanity has gone through tremendous challenges to make TB less threatening for our lives. Therefore, we are here to End TB all around the globe.



SWITZERLAND

TASK FORCE SECRETARIAT

TEREZA KASAEVA

- ▶ Global health leader
- ▶ WHO Global TB Programme Director, leading the response to End TB and responsible for setting norms, policies and standards
- ▶ Strong believer in the power of civil society and community representatives, and the importance of engagement to reach the SDGs

WHO is working closely with the Task Force in implementing jointly identified priorities and actions for ending TB. The Task Force is a strong ally in driving forward the End TB response. We need the voice and power of those most affected by TB and civil society to make the ambitious commitments made by Heads of State at the UN High-level Meeting a reality.



FARAI MAVHUNGA

- ▶ Head of the Vulnerable Populations, Communities and Comorbidities Unit at the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme, and the Task Force Secretariat.
- ▶ Public health practitioner with more than 10 years' experience in clinical and programmatic management of TB and HIV.
- ▶ Advocate for community engagement, involvement and ownership of the response to health challenges.

Partnerships between civil society and governments, through constructive dialogue, help us focus on the needs of the people as a key ingredient to improving the lives and well-being of the population. Civil society action is needed not only to advocate for improvement and change, but also to actively engage communities and complement governments' efforts to address these needs, as well as to help communicate these needs to the relevant policymakers. The Task Force aims to catalyse and support these actions.



LANA SYED

- ▶ Specialist in community health programming
- ▶ Civil society mainstreaming and partnerships
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation and project management

The strength of the Task Force is its diversity: both geographical and in its members' areas of expertise. Its action is anchored in perspectives from high-burden TB countries. Its underlying principles of transparency, open dialogue and mutual trust are increasingly influencing TB policies, decision-making and response at all levels.



ELIZAVETA SAFRONOVA

- ▶ Coordination and support of Task Force activities
- ▶ Ensuring strong community engagement in national efforts
- ▶ Support for WHO country offices

The voices of civil society, communities and youth and their engagement in governmental activities are essential for Ending TB.

 TB high-burden country



CAMEROON

BERTRAND KAMPOER

- ▶ Dynamics of Francophone Africa's Response to TB (DRAF-TB)
- ▶ Community, Rights and Gender
- ▶ Health Systems Strengthening

We need fast scale-up of TB preventive treatment, capacity-building for health-care providers, sustained community involvement including TB survivors, reduction of gender and human rights barriers, and attention to ethical considerations. As a Task Force, our mandate is also to support national programmes in strengthening community-based active TB case-finding and human rights approaches to close the notification gap, because currently a lot of efforts are still to be made.



UGANDA

ROGER PAUL KAMUGASHA

- ▶ Global digital reporting
- ▶ Health policy advocacy
- ▶ Mobilization of regional parliaments for health commitments

The Task Force is a global linkage between WHO, and civil society and affected communities in catalysing greater collaboration in ending TB at all levels. The Task Force has supported the WHO multisectoral accountability framework adoption across all regions ensuring achievement of commitments and targets of the UN high-level meeting on TB to ensure universal health coverage.



KENYA

EVALINE KIBUCHI

- ▶ National partnership
- ▶ Parliamentary engagement (regional)
- ▶ Advocacy for increase domestic investments

Three ingredients for the recipe to End TB with civil society: reduce stigma for improved access to TB services; create more awareness in the entire community; bring in other sectors to identify their role in ending TB. And ensure immediate rollout of research and development products and commodities. End product = well on the path to ending TB by 2030.



SOUTH AFRICA

HARRY HAUSLER

- ▶ National network lead
- ▶ Strengthened service delivery and technical assistance for TB and HIV prevention

The Task Force is an excellent forum that allows civil society and affected communities to provide input on WHO policies and guidelines to increase access to and quality of patient-centred TB services. Collective action is required to strengthen the TB prevention and treatment cascades for all, including key populations for TB. It is only through united efforts by WHO, governments, civil society and affected communities that we will End TB.

PAKISTAN



AMIR KHAN

- ▶ Research and policy-setting
- ▶ Service delivery

The Task Force has the intention and ability to make a significant contribution by effectively engaging civil society and affected communities in achieving the End TB goals and targets.

ANEETA PASHA

- ▶ Mental health
- ▶ Programme strategy, management and implementation
- ▶ Community engagement

The Task Force has the diversity and expertise to inform dialogue on important elements of TB prevention, detection and eradication. The holistic perspective of the group will strengthen health care services and delivery in these trying times.



INDIA



BLESSINA KUMAR

- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Regional technical assistance provider
- ▶ Boosting voices of TB survivors

The WHO Task Force is a great platform for bringing the grass-roots reality home to decision-makers and technical partners. This is a real dream come true, bridging the gap between policy-makers and people affected by TB. We are able to work more closely with WHO offices more closely, voice our concerns from ground level and benefit people who need the care most. To End TB, the affected community should have the space to work with stakeholders as a team.

INDONESIA



ESTY FEBRIANI MKES

- ▶ Service delivery and capacity-building
- ▶ Advocacy and research
- ▶ Faith-based organization representative

To end TB, we must bring all the stakeholders together and act in synergy to take action. The Task Force has proven the power of community engagement. This effort needs to continue in order to ensure the enabling environment that can support persons with TB until they are cured.

PARAN SARIMITA WINARNI

- ▶ DR-TB patient supporter through patients' organization (Pejuang Tangguh/PETA)
- ▶ Advocacy for the private sector
- ▶ Initiator and coalition leader of the Youth Movement Against TB in Indonesia (IMUT)

The Civil Society Task Force is a strong platform for engaging civil society and communities from all countries (specially from high TB burden countries). The Task Force provides inputs and calls for action to the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme, and drives change for better TB services. Each of us has important roles in the journey to TB elimination. But with the involvement of all – including affected communities, civil society, governments, the private sector and others – we are one step closer to TB elimination.



THAILAND



JEFFRY P. ACABA

- ▶ TB survivors movement
- ▶ Regional advocacy platform
- ▶ Capacity-building

The role of the Task Force is critical to ensuring that the global TB response, as framed by the End TB Strategy, is reflecting the priorities of people with and affected by TB.



NYAN WIN PHYO

- ▶ Advocacy for integration of TB and COVID-19 services
- ▶ Service delivery and technical assistance
- ▶ Hard-to-reach areas to serve marginalized people, with focus on the cross border Greater Mekong Subregion

Under the strong leadership of WHO and with the meaningful engagement of civil society organizations, our dreams can come true and together we can defeat TB and COVID-19.



CAMBODIA



CHOUB SOK CHAMREUN

- ▶ Community-based TB programming
- ▶ Community and health system strengthening
- ▶ Policy, advocacy and partnership building

Ending tuberculosis requires a paradigm shift: more innovative and stronger engagement than ever, with partnership across all sectors. Being part of the Task Force is an exceptional opportunity to reflect and set an example of how civil society and TB-affected communities can be resources for the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme and for TB response in order to meet and achieve the TB targets by 2030.



THE TASK FORCE IN A SNAPSHOT

Overview of WHO engagement with Task Force members

WHO guideline development group on nucleic acid amplification tests to detect TB and drug-resistant TB

7-18 December 2020

WHO event to commemorate International Human Rights Day

10 December 2020

Training on WHO ENGAGE-TB approach for Task Force members

December 2020

Global TB Report 2020

14 October 2020

UN General Assembly side event "Progress and Multisectoral Action towards achieving global targets to end TB": Blessi's passionate call for greater investment, accountability and research to end TB in the face of the COVID-19 crisis

23 September 2020

Adoption of global strategy for TB research and innovation

10 August 2020

WHO guideline development group on systematic screening for tuberculosis disease

June-October 2020

Webinar to promote uptake of new rapid diagnostics and drug-resistant TB treatment

9 July 2020

Webinar led by WHO DG on civil society engagement in COVID-19 response

24 July 2020

UN Secretary-General's priority recommendations to accelerate the TB response and reach targets

21 October 2020

Launch of tools for national assessments of civil society engagement for the Multisectoral Accountability Framework for TB (MAF-TB)

8 April 2020

World TB Day 2020 WHO Online Talk Show

24 March 2020

WHO information note on TB and COVID-19

12 May 2020

Introductory meeting of WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Tuberculosis (STAG-TB)

24-25 June 2020

-  High-level advocacy and engagement
-  Action on COVID-19
-  Mainstreaming civil society voices
-  Multisectoral engagement
-  Policy development

WHO guideline development group on the treatment of drug-susceptible tuberculosis

April 2021



Joint statement by the Task Force and WHO Director General: "Urgent actions to stop preventable deaths and suffering due to tuberculosis and recover gains lost during the COVID-19 pandemic"

30 April 2021



Virtual meeting of the WHO Director-General, regional WHO leadership and the Task Force

30 March - 1 April 2021



WHO End TB webinar on multisectoral accountability efforts

5 May 2021



WHO End TB webinar on multisectoral action

18 December 2020



WHO guideline development group on the management of tuberculosis in children and adolescents

May-June 2021



The World TB Day 2021 WHO online event 'The Clock is Ticking'

24 March 2021



Special mini-meet of the Working Group on Public-Private Mix for TB Prevention and Care

20 May 2021



Developing new definition of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis

27 January 2021



High-level event on scale up towards achieving the 2022 UN high-level meeting target on TB preventive treatment

16 June 2021



Webinar on WHO TB Policy Guidance Outlook for 2021 benefited from Task Force perspective

16 March 2021



WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Tuberculosis (STAG-TB) with Task Force perspective on the recent progress and challenges

21-23 June 2021



International Women's Day webinar co-hosted by WHO and the Global Coalition of TB Activists

8 March 2021

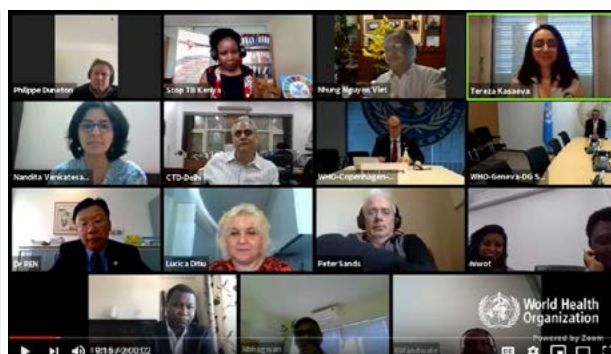


-  High-level advocacy and engagement
-  Action on COVID-19
-  Mainstreaming civil society voices
-  Multisectoral engagement
-  Policy development

HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

► **The World TB Day WHO Online Talk Show with the Task Force at the forefront, 24 March 2020, virtual event**

The theme of World TB Day 2020 - 'It's time' - put the accent on the urgency to act on the commitments made by global leaders to: scale up access to prevention and treatment; build accountability; ensure sufficient and sustainable financing including for research; promote an end to stigma and discrimination, and promote an equitable, rights-based and people-centered TB response. WHO headquarters convened an online talk show focusing on aforementioned priorities, and urging countries to ensure continuity of TB services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The speakers included Evaline Kibuchi and Nandita Venkatesan from the Task Force, high level government representatives, heads of agencies, researchers and partners.



[▶ Access the video recording of the talk show here](#)

► **Task Force voices concerns and highlights demands at the introductory meeting of WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Tuberculosis (STAG-TB), 24-25 June 2020, virtual event**

In his keynote address to the introductory STAG-TB meeting, Dr Tedros emphasized the important strategic role of STAG-TB in efforts to end TB, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jamilya Ismoilova, STAG-TB and Task Force member provided an update on the Task Force involvement on TB and COVID-19 response, and highlighted the need for strong engagement of WHO leadership to help strengthen the coordination of civil society engagement globally as well as in countries, through closer collaboration with the governments based on clear guidance; called for faster progress towards the adoption of all-oral treatment regimens for MDR-TB, especially in the COVID-19 context when such regimens are easier to administer. Furthermore, Task Force representatives stressed the importance of multisectoral action on TB, through the Director-General's support, to maintain the gains, avoid further slowing of progress, break down the silos, and include TB voices in both TB and COVID-19 agendas in countries and globally.



► **Communities' advocacy efforts to influence the Global Fund, December 2020, virtual event**

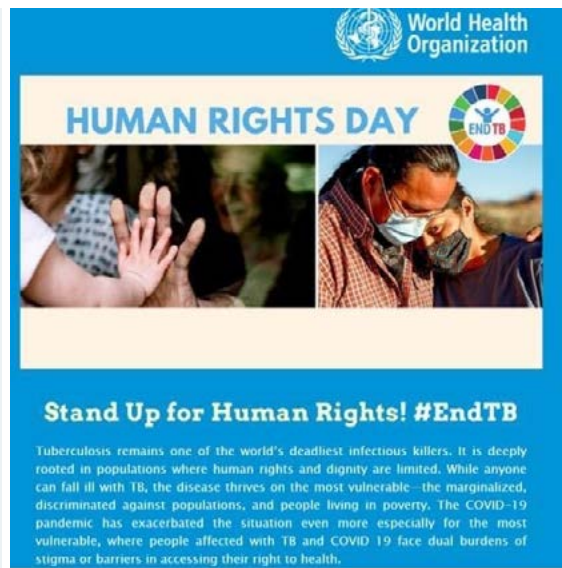
Blessi Kumar participated in the virtual consultation with regional communities and civil society, themed "Towards The Global Fund That We Still Want" convened by APCASO, as the host of the Asia-Pacific Community, Rights and Gender (APCRG) platform, and Global Fund Advocates Network Asia-Pacific (GFAN AP), in partnership with key regional populations and civil society organization networks and platforms.

This consultation resulted in the drafting of an Asia-Pacific communities and civil society statement, "The Global Fund That We Still Want!".



► **WHO commemorates the International Human Rights Day with strong Task Force voices, 10 December 2020, virtual event**

The Civil Society Task Force on TB, represented by Jeff Acaba and Evaline Kibuchi, joined the webinar organized by the WHO Global TB Programme to mark the International Human Rights Day 2020. They spoke about the need to rethink existing paradigms and approaches in responding to TB, highlighting that current efforts to end TB continue to neglect the human rights of people with and affected by TB. Human rights are at the core of WHO's End TB Strategy and the United Nations Political Declaration. Ensuring universal health coverage so that all people have access to the services they need, without facing financial hardship or stigma and discrimination, is a legal and moral imperative, and of crucial importance to ensuring an effective response to end TB. Addressing stigma and removing discriminatory laws are key in order to achieve the targets and commitments made. The engagement of civil society and affected communities in achieving this is critical.



► **WHO and the Global Coalition of TB Activists co-host webinar to mark International Women's Day, 8 March 2021, virtual event**

Under the theme "#ChooseToChallenge: A Gender-Sensitive & Equitable Response to End TB", this webinar was co-chaired by the Director of WHO Global TB Programme, Tereza Kasaeva, and Task Force member and the lead of the Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA), Blessi Kumar. The event brought together TB-affected communities and their coalitions, women's groups, community-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and experts working on women and health, policymakers and programme implementers, to create a multisectoral conversation around developing a gender-sensitive response to end TB. Evaline Kibuchi from the Task Force participated in the event and flagged the barriers and proposed solutions for ensuring equitable health care for women, and for widening understanding of gender inclusivity in the global response to end TB.



► **World TB Day 2021 with testimony by Fatima Karmadwala, MDR-TB survivor and a Task Force member, 24 March 2021, virtual event**

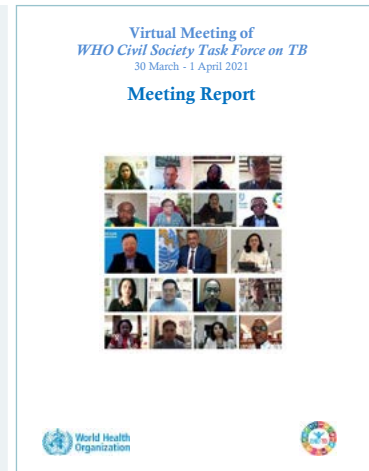
The theme of World TB Day 2021 – 'The Clock is Ticking' – conveys the sense that the world is running out of time to act on the commitments made by global leaders to end TB. Over 200 participants joined the virtual talk show to commemorate World TB Day. Fatima Karmadwala, a Task Force member, provided her testimony as an MDR-TB survivor and conveyed the Task Force perspective on the need to accelerate efforts to end TB through meaningful engagement with affected communities and civil society.



► WHO Director-General, regional WHO leadership and Task Force jointly discuss priorities and needs in a virtual meeting, 30 March – 1 April 2021

The Global TB Programme convened a virtual meeting of the Task Force between 30 March and 1 April 2021. In addition to the Task Force members and the secretariat, the event was joined by the WHO Director-General and WHO TB representatives from regional and country levels. Within the meeting, WHO Director-General engaged in an open dialogue with the Task Force to discuss their priorities. The outcome of the session included agreement between the Director-General and the Task Force members to produce a joint statement focusing on the urgent need to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on efforts to end TB. The consultation with the WHO TB leadership from regional and country levels focused on jointly identifying priority actions to strengthen the engagement of civil society and affected communities at regional and country levels.

[Access the meeting report here](#)



► Task Force representatives (Harry Hausler and Chamreun Sok Choub) at the special high-level event to discuss the needed scale up towards achieving the 2022 UN high-level meeting target on TB preventive treatment, 16 June 2021, virtual event

At the high-level event, Task Force representatives stressed the importance of fully resourced partnerships with civil society and affected communities in order to scale up TB prevention, through advocacy, demand creation, psychosocial adherence support and stigma mitigation, with a human rights-based and people-centred approach, leaving no one behind.

[Access the advocacy toolkit linked to the event here](#)



“ The WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB strongly supports the Call to Action to scale up TB preventive treatment for TB contacts and people living with HIV through partnerships with civil society and affected communities.”

WHO CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE ON TB

► **WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Tuberculosis (STAG-TB) with the Task Force perspective on the recent progress and challenges, 21-23 June 2021, virtual event**

The twenty-first meeting of STAG-TB focused on the progress against the 2020 STAG-TB meeting recommendations; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on TB detection, disease burden and global targets; and WHO solutions to mitigate and reverse the COVID-19 impact on TB. During the meeting, the Task Force secretariat provided an overview of key progress made since 2019 and Chamreun Choub Sok Chamreun joined the presentation to introduce the Task Force workplan for 2021-2022.



TASK FORCE ACTION AND THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACCELERATE THE TB RESPONSE

► UN General Assembly side event "Progress and Multisectoral Action towards achieving global targets to end TB": Blessi calls for greater investments, accountability and research to end TB, 23 September 2020, virtual event

Held on the sidelines of the 75th UN General Assembly (UNGA), and co-organized by WHO and the Russian Federation, the event brought together a distinguished line-up of speakers spanning WHO and UN leadership, health ministers, partners and civil society. The event focused on the progress report towards achieving targets and implementation of the UN political declaration on TB, with a spotlight on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on progress towards ending TB. The event was opened by the WHO Director-General and the Honourable Minister of Health of the Russian Federation Dr Mikhail Murashko. Among a series of high-level speakers, Blessi as a member of the WHO Civil Society Taskforce on TB and CEO of GCTA made a passionate call for greater investment, accountability and research to end TB especially in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.



► UN Secretary-General outlines priority recommendations to accelerate the TB response and reach targets, 21 October 2020

On 21 October 2020, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres released a report entitled "Progress towards the achievement of global tuberculosis targets and implementation of the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the fight against tuberculosis. The report includes the inputs of the Civil Society Task Force, and stresses that although high-level commitments and targets have galvanized global and national progress towards ending TB, urgent and more ambitious investments and actions are required, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on data submitted to the WHO Global TB Programme by around 200 countries, the report provides a review of progress towards global TB targets and on the implementation of the declaration. Despite recent achievements in driving down incidence and deaths, and in closing gaps in access to prevention and care, the report underscores that the gains are fragile. Member States are urged to implement the 10 priority recommendations to put the world on track to reach agreed targets by 2022 and beyond.



[Access the report here](#)

10 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S 2020 PROGRESS REPORT

ON TB FOR ACTIONS NEEDED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS GLOBAL TB TARGETS

1. Fully activate high-level leadership to urgently reduce TB deaths and drive multisectoral action to end TB
2. Urgently increase funding for essential TB services including the health workforce
3. Advance universal health coverage to ensure all people with TB have access to affordable quality care and resolve underreporting challenges
4. Address the drug-resistant TB crisis to close persistent gaps in care
5. Dramatically scale up provision of preventive treatment for TB
6. Promote human rights and combat stigma and discrimination
7. Ensure meaningful engagement of civil society, communities and people affected by TB
8. Substantially increase investments in TB research to drive technological breakthroughs and rapid uptake of innovations
9. Ensure that TB prevention and care are safeguarded in the context of COVID-19 and other emerging threats
10. Request WHO to continue to provide global leadership for the TB response, working in close collaboration with Member States and other stakeholders, including to prepare for a high-level meeting on TB in 2023, that aligns with the high level meeting of the e General Assembly on universal health coverage also to be held in 2023

TASK FORCE IMPACT IN HIGH TB BURDEN COUNTRIES

► Indonesia's President demonstrates great commitment to TB response in collaboration with civil society, July 2020, Jakarta, Indonesia

The President of Indonesia summarized his cabinet's commitments at a high-level event, with engagement of Esty Febriani. These commitments include the integration of active case finding for TB and COVID-19; uninterrupted TB diagnostic and treatment services as well as maintained logistics and medication for people with TB. The President also expressed his readiness to issue a related Presidential Decree to ensure the continuity of these essential services. Finally, the President committed to multisectoral action to tackle TB, especially in prevention and promotion.



► Network of TB survivors in Kenya win the Kochon award, November 2020

The network of TB survivors (also called "TB champions") in Kenya was established in 2020, with support of the Stop TB Partnership-Kenya, with Evaline Kibuchi as its CEO. Members of the network are persons who have had TB and/or are currently undergoing treatment. The network benefitted from capacity building to boost meaningful engagement in TB advocacy and resource mobilization, as well as in TB policy development processes. In 2020, the network participated in the proposal writing to the Global Fund to ensure strong human rights and gender components throughout the application process. For their contribution, the network was awarded the Kochon prize in November 2020. The network of TB champions in Kenya is hosted at the Stop TB Partnership-Kenya secretariat.

► Launch of the national strategy to end stigma and discrimination associated with TB in India, 24 March 2021, Delhi, India

The Strategy to End Stigma and Discrimination Associated with TB was launched at the World TB Day 2021 event by Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. India is one of the first countries to develop a strategy to end stigma and discrimination associated with TB. The Global Coalition of TB Activists, with Blessi as its CEO, developed this document in partnership with the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, the Resource Group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH), AlertTB, Global Health Strategies, TB Alert India, USAID India, Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) and the National TB Elimination Program, Government of India. The authors hope that other countries will use this as an example and develop their own strategic guidance to end stigma to end TB.



► Jeffry Acaba supports the 10th Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and National TB Programme Managers Meeting to End TB in the Western Pacific, 30-31 March 2021, virtual event

Jeffry Acaba joined a two-day virtual meeting with TAG members and National TB Programme managers across countries in the WHO Western Pacific region. The meeting aimed at collecting additional inputs and support in the process of finalizing the Regional TB Framework 2021-2030 for WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific. Jeffry co-facilitated one of the breakout groups, composed of the representatives of Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines

► Task Force member contributes to the Global Fund application for COVID-19 emergency fast track fund in Thailand, March 2021

In March 2021, Nyan participated in preparation of the proposal by the Country Coordination Mechanism of Thailand to access the COVID-19 emergency fast track fund by using previously approved budget. He continued to engage in the production of the full proposal for COVID-19 Response Mechanism funding for migrants and communities affected by the pandemic. In particular, Nyan advocated for eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination to be anchored in principles of human rights and equity for migrants, refugees, stateless and displaced persons who are residing in Thailand and who are not eligible for free COVID-19 vaccine due to their unregulated migrant status.

► **Growing multisectoral action on TB in Kenya with civil society as the co-lead, 2020-2021**

Kenya is in the process of implementing the WHO Multisectoral Accountability Framework for TB (MAF-TB). The efforts are led by the national TB programme and civil society (Stop TB Partnership-Kenya with Evaline Kibuchi as its lead). In 2020, the country established the MAF-TB mechanism to engage in the necessary assessments and processes, including mapping of the stakeholders, producing a concept note with a roadmap and terms of reference to guide the committee working on the multisectoral action and accountability in TB response. With technical support from the WHO country office, the committee has developed a draft framework for multisectoral engagement in collaboration with the relevant sectors. Efforts to engage other key sectors in TB response are ongoing.

► **Securing essential TB services for cross-border migrants between Myanmar and Thailand in 2020-2021**

In Nyan's home country Myanmar, most TB services were suspended due to COVID-19. This negatively impacted TB case notifications and treatment adherence. Moreover, recent political instability and civil unrest had a further negative impact on the availability of and accessibility to health services including TB. As a civil society representative, Nyan has been using social media to advocate for immediate recovery of TB services in the cross-border area where he works. Thanks to the support of Nyan's colleagues and social media followers, he continued the advocacy, contributing to faster restoration of a number of TB services for the vulnerable cross-border migrant populations he is catering for through his work with the World Vision Thailand.



► **Diversifying civil society action in Brazil and beyond, 2020-2021**

In the second half of 2020, Brazilian civil society, including Ezio Távora dos Santos Filho, conducted a national assessment entitled "The Impact of COVID-19 on Policies for Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS", in line with the UN Secretary-General's progress report towards the achievement of the global tuberculosis targets of the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on the fight against tuberculosis. In early 2021, the English version of the assessment findings was widely distributed, generating interest among decision makers and researchers in the WHO Region of the Americas. The assessment benefited from WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme support. Engagement with PAHO throughout the process helped enhance the dissemination of the assessment recommendations in the WHO Region of the Americas.

Internationally, Ezio has been engaged in a number of important clinical trials around TB. As these trials are being completed and planned for in 2021, the affected communities and civil society are focusing on the communities' preparedness for results dissemination and policy discussion.

To raise the visibility of the role and importance of advocacy in health, Ezio has been engaged in an initiative targeting medical and nursing schools through "TB Students' Leagues".

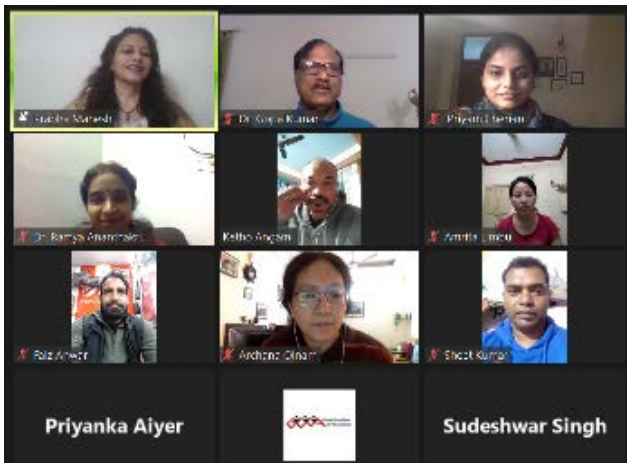
An example of Ezio's high-level engagement is captured in his contributions to the public hearing with the Brazilian congress, which included discussions around the challenges for the effective implementation of the national TB policy in view of the negative impact of COVID-19, with evidence of rising poverty levels, decrease of availability and utilization of TB diagnostics and services, and an increased risk to contract MDR-TB.



► **Activating the human rights-based response to TB, December 2020 - March 2021**

GCTA (with Blessi Kumar as its lead) produced a technical brief on activating a human rights-based tuberculosis response. GCTA's country partners in India, Indonesia, Peru and Cameroon have translated the brief on strengthening a human rights-based response to TB into Hindi, Bahasa, Spanish and French.

GCTA's country partners in India – Touched by TB and REACH – convened a national consultation on a human rights-based response to TB on 10 December 2020, coinciding with World Human Rights Day. The event aimed to reiterate the importance of upholding human rights, especially in the context of TB. The consultation introduced the brief, engaging with panellists from national and local TB networks, community-based organizations working with LGBTQ+ persons, sex worker organizations, and drug user networks.



GCTA's country partner in Cameroon (For Impacts in Social Health--FIS--with Bertrand Kamper as its lead) conducted the first consultation with the civil society on 10 March 2021, with GCTA support. The event focused on the brief and the importance of human rights for any person seeking health services. Consultation outcomes included a set of recommendations with advocacy activities to achieve a desirable change for a people-centred and a rights-based approach to TB. A follow up consultation was held on 17 March 2021 to sensitize additional key stakeholders including community health workers.

Similar efforts in Peru and Indonesia are ongoing.

► Civil society in Pakistan boosts efforts to end TB in multiple priority workstreams, from 2020 to date, Pakistan

The engagement of Amir Khan and of civil society in Pakistan grew steadily between mid-2020 and mid-2021. With financial support from the Stop TB Partnership, the Association for Social Development (ASD) – the organization Amir is leading – helped establish a TB survivors' group and adapted the "OnImpact" digital application which aims to empower people affected by TB through enhanced access to information and provision of means to engage and report TB challenges. The model is currently being considered for scale-up.



To strengthen multisectoral engagement, Stop TB Pakistan facilitated the engagement of parliamentarians at national level, which resulted in discussions about TB in the Parliament's Standing Committee on Health; Amir assisted the team in planning and preparing for the related consultations.



In order to mitigate the negative effect of COVID-19 on access to TB diagnosis, ASD has developed and is piloting a digital application for referral of persons with TB symptoms through a public-private mix approach. The ongoing pilot is expected to be scaled up using resources of the TB programme. Furthermore, in response to the higher risk of drug-resistant transmission related to challenges with access to TB services due to COVID-19, in early 2021 ASD assisted the provincial TB control programme to decentralize care for persons receiving drug-resistant TB treatment and secure essential services closer to affected persons, avoiding long travel using public transport.



► Amplifying the voices of civil society and affected communities in Francophone African countries, from 2020 to date

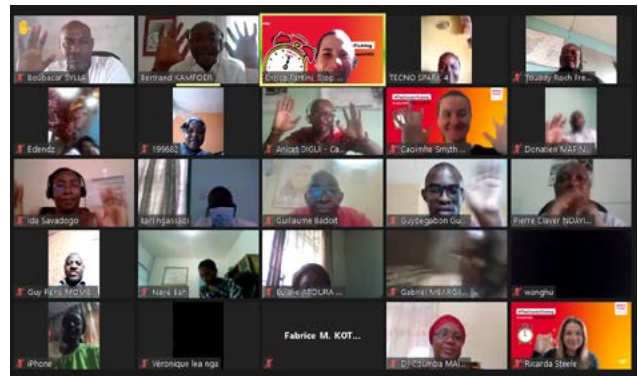
Since July 2020, the Francophone African network of TB survivors (DRAF-TB), with Bertrand Kampoer as its head, has been leading an initiative to engage civil society and TB survivors in the national MAF-TB baseline assessments in twelve countries and implementation of the political declaration linked to the UN High-Level Meeting on TB, focusing on the engagement of the parliamentarians. In addition, the initiative aims to advocate for strengthened inclusion of community, rights and gender in the twelve countries' national TB responses, as well as to evaluate barriers to community-led TB initiatives in the context of COVID-19 and roll-out advocacy campaigns to address the identified barriers.



In order to evaluate different modalities for TB care in the context of COVID-19, Bertrand and his organization have been assessing the feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of community-based TB care vs. facility-based TB care in four countries (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Niger and Chad).

Bertrand also co-authored a publication titled "COVID-19 in Africa: Community and digital technologies for tuberculosis management," which stresses the crucial role that local civil society stakeholders can play in supporting national TB programmes to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on tuberculosis, emphasizing that their capacity and engagement should be strengthened in line with the WHO ENGAGE-TB guidance.

In his home country of Cameroon, Bertrand is the principal investigator of a national evaluation aiming to define key populations, recommendations for gender-sensitive TB response and removing legal barriers to TB services. In the reporting period, Bertrand led or co-led a number of visible regional events, including the francophone launch of the report "Deadly Divide: TB Commitments vs. TB Realities", Africa Coalition on TB (ACT!) workshop on tuberculosis, and the meeting of The Global TB Caucus and DRAF-TB.



► Joining hands with civil society on multisectoral action and mitigating the negative impact of COVID-19 on the TB response in Uganda, from 2020 to date

Roger Kamugasha worked closely with the WHO country office in Uganda and the National TB and Leprosy Programme in approaching the Prime Minister's and the President's Office about ensuring that Uganda meets the commitments of the political declaration (linked to the UN High-Level Meeting on TB), in collaboration with the private-for-profit sector. In conjunction with the Uganda Stop TB Partnership and stakeholders, further efforts were made to engage the Parliamentary TB Caucus in honouring these commitments. As part of these initiatives, a prominent artist, Bebe Cool, is newly engaged in an innovative TB awareness-raising campaign. Roger was also involved in the National Task Force on COVID-19 on preparedness and response, in order to highlight the need to ensure double focus on TB and COVID-19 so as to avoid a reversal of gains already attained in the national TB response. In particular, Roger voiced concerns about the Xpert machines used to diagnose TB being shifted to use for COVID-19 diagnosis, and highlighted challenges with ensuring quality treatment adherence support for persons on MDR-TB treatment.



► **Harry Hausler at the forefront of efforts to secure TB visibility at the time of COVID-19 in South Africa, 2020-2021**

The TB Think Tank works on recovery plan for TB and roadmap for TB Prevention Guidelines. Harry actively participated in biweekly meetings of the TB Think Tank working group on the accelerated response to the National TB Control Programme (NTCP) recovery plan, which aims to address the losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Harry also chaired a meeting of the TB Prevention Task Team on 23 November 2020 to agree on a roadmap to finalize the TB Preventive Therapy (TPT) guidelines to include the new short course regimens and provide TPT for people living with HIV and all household contacts regardless of age or HIV status. Harry presented the new TPT guidelines at a satellite symposium of the South Africa TB Conference on 7 June 2021.



Annual General Meeting – "Innovations, setbacks and recovery: lessons for COVID-19 and recovery plans for our TB and HIV efforts".

On 19 November 2020, TB HIV Care (with Harry as its lead) held its 91st Annual General Meeting. The theme of this virtual event was "Innovations, setbacks and recovery: lessons from COVID-19 and recovery plans for our TB and HIV efforts". The presentation of their annual report was followed by distinguished and strategic guest speakers, including Nolwanda Skepu sharing her experience as a COVID-19 survivor; Dr John Blandford, Country Director of CDC South Africa; Dr Tereza Kasaeva, Director of the Global Tuberculosis Programme at WHO; and the Honourable Dr Joseph Phaahla, Deputy Minister of Health. All speakers acknowledged the important role of TB HIV Care and other civil society partners to end TB and AIDS in the face of the new global pandemic of COVID-19.

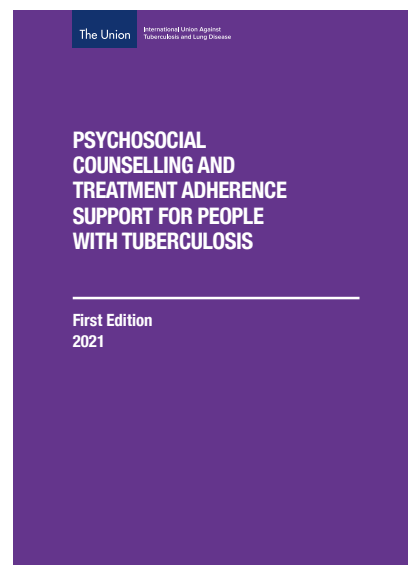
Commitment to TB Emergency Response Plan from provincial Premier.

Harry Hausler was elected as the civil society Co-Chair of the Provincial Council on AIDS and TB (PCAT) in the Western Cape. On World TB Day 2021, the Western Cape Premier, Alan Winde, attended an event at Brooklyn Chest Hospital to launch a digital chest x-ray programme to help diagnose TB. At the event, the Premier committed to launching an emergency response plan for TB within 30 days. On 23 April 2021, Harry chaired a civil society forum meeting to provide input into the Western Cape Emergency Response Plan for TB, which was adopted on 26 April, and launched by the Premier on 28 April 2021.



► **Jamilya Ismoilova supporting and promoting strong civil society engagement in the European region, from 2020 to date**

During the reporting period, Jamilya presented the progress made towards global TB targets at a round table organized by WHO Tajikistan, "The Role and Opportunities of Civil Society in Accelerating the Achievement of the Health-related SDGs in Tajikistan". Jamilya was one of the expert reviewers of a new technical guide, *Psychosocial counselling and treatment adherence support for people affected by tuberculosis*, published in April 2021, authored by TB Alert, with support from The Union, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Stop TB Partnership. Jamilya also provided technical assistance on the development of the national strategic plans of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as on proposals to the Global Fund which integrated gender-sensitive and human rights-based approaches. In addition, she contributed to the design and implementation of World TB Day 2021 and the COVID-19 social media campaign for the Central Asia Region.

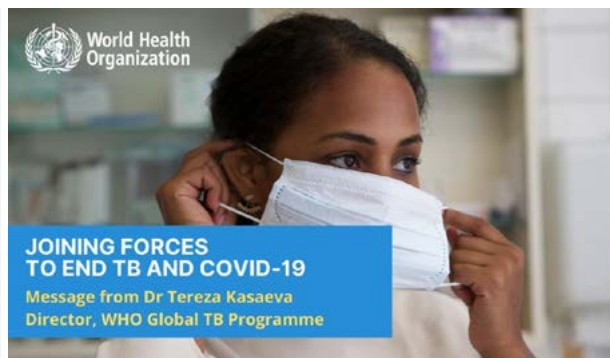


➔ [Access the document here](#)

TASK FORCE ACTION IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

► **Joining forces to end TB and COVID-19, 1** **2 May 2020, Geneva, Switzerland**

In May 2020, WHO issued an information note on considerations for TB services during the COVID-19 crisis. The note was developed with inputs from WHO regional and country offices, key partners and the WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB. In a related webinar, Dr Tedros noted that “COVID-19 is highlighting just how vulnerable people with lung diseases and weakened immune systems can be. The world committed to end TB by 2030; improving prevention is key to making this happen. Millions of people need to be able to take TB preventive treatment to stop the onset of disease, avert suffering and save lives”. The information note was updated in May 2021.



[Access the document here](#)

[Access the message here](#)

► **Task Force voices at the webinar led by WHO DG on civil society engagement in COVID-19 response, from July 2020 to date, virtual events**

At the 8 July 2020 webinar convened by the WHO Director-General, Harry Hausler made a number of strong points highlighting TB needs and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the webinar, Dr Tedros flagged the engagement with Blessi Kumar as an excellent example of collaboration with civil society in WHO guidelines development process. This webinar was part of a series regularly convened by WHO DG.

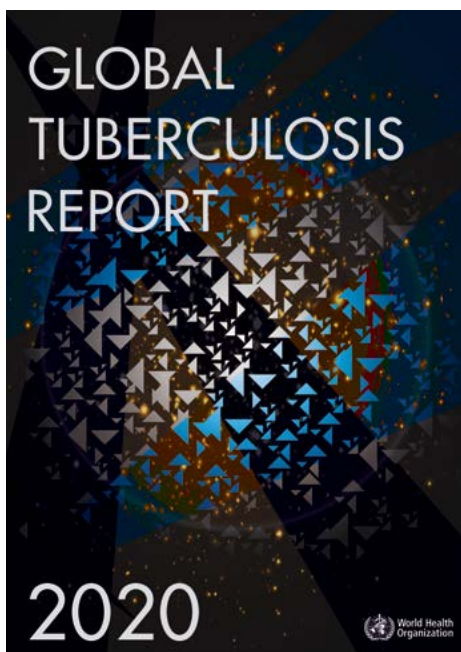


► **Disruption in services caused by COVID-19 in the Global TB Report 2020: Task Force highlights essential role of civil society in representing and giving voice to the affected people, 14 October 2020, virtual event**

During the virtual launch of the Global TB Report 2020, Evaline Kibuchi highlighted the essential role of civil society in representing and giving voice to affected people, which is more important than ever in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and challenges in accessing care. She said that civil society and affected communities must be at the centre of support to countries in reaching the high-level targets, and of advocacy efforts to boost high-level stakeholder accountability. The report presents evidence of disruptions in TB services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In many countries, human, financial and other resources have been reallocated from TB to the COVID-19 response. Data has shown significant reductions of 25-30% of total notifications in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines compared to the same period in 2019, which could lead to a dramatic increase in additional TB deaths. For the first time ever, the terms of reference and the composition of the Task Force were featured in the report.



[Access the document here](#)



BOX 8.4

The WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB

Building on the End TB Strategy, in 2018 the political declaration at the UN high-level meeting on TB called for prioritizing the strong and meaningful engagement of civil society and affected communities in all aspects of the TB response.

The WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB provides a platform for discussion and exchange with WHO, building on the commitments made by the WHO Director-General during the first WHO global ministerial conference on TB (in November 2017) and several consultations.^a It aims to harness the untapped potential for engagement with civil society and affected communities at all levels.

The current mandate of the Task Force is for the period January 2019 to December 2020. Priorities include:

- ▶ helping to translate the End TB Strategy and associated WHO guidance into practice by mainstreaming the voices of communities affected by TB and their networks at global, regional and country levels;
- ▶ catalysing greater collaboration between civil society organizations, NTPs and WHO at all levels, including through meaningful engagement of civil society and affected communities in policy development;
- ▶ contributing to the implementation of WHO guidance on TB, with a particular focus on multisectoral action for social protection and universal health coverage, and advocating for their inclusion in national TB strategies and plans, national social programmes, national political platforms (e.g. parliaments) and regional and global platforms for policy dialogue;

- ▶ promoting and nurturing strong and effective links between community-based actors and NTPs or their equivalent, as well as promoting demand for TB prevention, diagnosis, care and treatment services;
- ▶ developing a framework for monitoring and evaluation of collaboration among civil society organizations, NTPs and WHO at all levels;
- ▶ promoting capacity-building for civil society members and representatives of communities affected by TB to intensify information-sharing, dialogue and consultation on the implementation of WHO guidance;
- ▶ advocating for increased domestic funding and donor commitments for the TB response at all levels.

Fifteen civil society members were selected, with input from an independent selection panel. Selection was based on assessments of individual competencies and experience, and the process aimed to balance geography, gender and the diversity of communities and civil society representatives.

^a WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB: Engagement with civil society as the driver for change (<https://www.who.int/publications/item/who-civil-society-task-force-on-tb>, accessed 20 September 2020)

▶ Civil society actions to uphold political commitment to TB in the face of COVID-19 in Kenya, December 2020

In a bid to keep TB high on the political and health agenda, civil society in Kenya used the UN General Assembly special session on COVID-19 to produce a letter signed by civil society organizations that was sent to the Cabinet Secretary. The letter aimed to inform the Cabinet Secretary's participation in the UN General Assembly special session, by giving a civil society perspective on the TB response in Kenya and the negative impact TB would have on health indicators in the country if TB was not addressed alongside COVID-19. Furthermore, African civil society organizations sent another letter to the African Union, sensitizing its membership to the effect of COVID-19 on efforts in HIV, TB and malaria. The letter requested the African Union to ensure the continued provision of comprehensive healthcare services and sustained focus on defeating other life-threatening diseases as Africa battles COVID-19; to escalate the engagement of community stakeholders and put them at the heart of the COVID-19 response, especially in prevention, contact tracing and surveillance; and to enhance multi-disciplinary partnerships for robust coordination at national, regional and global level. Evaline Kibuchi was closely engaged in these efforts.

▶ Navigating TB in the Time of COVID-19 in South East Asia - The Clock is Ticking, 24 March 2021, virtual event

The Global Coalition of TB Activists, with Blessi Kumar as its CEO, hosted a special World TB Day 2021 webinar "Navigating TB in the Time of Covid-19 – The Clock is Ticking", along with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia. The webinar showcased ground realities, lived experiences, country responses and political commitments from the South-East Asia Region along with global perspectives and policies.

[Access the video here](#)



► **Task Force and WHO Director-General produce a joint statement: “Urgent actions to stop preventable deaths and suffering due to tuberculosis and recover gains lost during the COVID-19 pandemic”, 30 April 2021, Geneva, Switzerland**

In April 2021, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus held a virtual session with the members of the WHO Civil Society Task Force on Tuberculosis, focused on addressing the alarming global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the TB response. The meeting highlighted the need for urgent restoration of essential TB services. The far-reaching impact of COVID-19 on access to TB services and on the determinants of TB, including poverty and food security, make the adoption of a multisectoral approach, with the engagement of affected communities and of civil society, even more pertinent in order to stop further declines in case notifications and get on track to end TB. The session was part of the annual meeting of the Task Force with all three levels of the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme.

We, the members of the Task Force, join the WHO Director-General in this call for urgent action, noting that:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted access to TB services and is reversing the gains made towards ending TB.
- Latest data collected by WHO from more than 80 countries indicates that 1.4 million fewer people received care for TB in 2020 than in 2019, with a 21% drop in TB notifications over this period. This could lead to an additional half a million TB deaths.
- Global extreme poverty will rise for the first time in over 20 years, according to the World Bank, thereby causing a significant increase in undernourishment, a major determinant of TB. This will therefore lead to more suffering and death due to TB if appropriate action is not taken now.

In this joint statement, we urge governments, partners and stakeholders to take immediate action to:

1. Restore access to essential TB services to stop the decline in TB diagnosis and care by facilitating and supporting continuation/ completion of treatment for those diagnosed with TB through patient-centred approaches, including home-based and community-based care models as well as use of digital technologies, and in line with the latest WHO guidelines. This is also critical to stopping further transmission of TB.
2. Harness the multisectoral response to COVID-19 to galvanize and strengthen ongoing multisectoral engagement and action to combat TB, including social protection for people affected by TB, with high-level government leadership and active involvement of civil society, affected communities, partners and other stakeholders.
3. Systematically monitor, promptly analyse and address the impact of COVID-19 on TB services across the continuum of care, in close collaboration with affected communities and civil society.
4. Leverage domestic and external financial resources, including funding from the Global Fund and other bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, to introduce and scale-up innovative approaches for provision of TB services, including the use of digital technologies and dual testing for TB and COVID-19, and to strengthen airborne infection control, including procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers and community workers involved in TB care and prevention activities.
5. Fully engage affected communities and civil society towards responsive, people-centred, rights-based, equitable and stigma-free strategies, to ensure access to TB services by people further disadvantaged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. Intensify research and development to speed up access to new diagnostics, drugs and vaccines. Lessons learnt from COVID-19 vaccine development should be harnessed to accelerate the development of effective vaccines for TB.

We, the members of WHO’s Civil Society Task Force on TB commit to actively work in close collaboration with all stakeholders under the leadership of WHO to support WHO Member States to implement the above commitments to ensure that people with TB are not left behind, thereby accelerating progress towards making universal health coverage a reality.

In June 2021, Dr Tedros reached out to WHO Regional Directors to draw attention to the joint statement and provide specific guidance to WHO regional and country offices on the needed support to translate the joint statement into action.

 [Access the Joint Statement here](#)



JOINT STATEMENT: WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE ON TB URGENT ACTIONS TO STOP PREVENTABLE DEATHS AND SUFFERING DUE TO TUBERCULOSIS AND RECOVER GAINS LOST DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus held a virtual session with the members of the WHO Civil Society Task Force on Tuberculosis (CSTF-TB) in April 2021, focused on addressing the alarming global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the TB response. The meeting highlighted the need for urgent restoration of essential TB services.

The far-reaching consequences of COVID-19 on access to TB services and on the determinants of TB, including poverty and food security, make it even more pertinent to adopt a multisectoral approach, with engagement of affected communities, and civil society, to stop further declines in case notifications and get on track to end TB. The session was part of the annual meeting of the CSTF-TB with all the three levels of the WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme.

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MAINSTREAMING TASK FORCE VOICES

► Training on integrated community-based TB service delivery (WHO ENGAGE-TB approach) is fine-tuned through Task Force feedback, December 2020

ENGAGE-TB virtual training for the WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB took place between 6 November and 16 December 2020. The training was delivered by the WHO Global TB Programme, in partnership with the International Training Centre of the ILO. The purpose of this training was to align the members' understanding of the scope and guidance on integrated community-based TB service delivery (WHO ENGAGE-TB approach), and to receive the members' feedback on the training in order to fine-tune subsequent training editions. By the end of the training, participants had received an overview of the ENGAGE-TB cycle; reflected on others' viewpoints and perspectives; discussed skills needed for stakeholder engagement in the implementation and delivery of integrated community-based TB activities; practiced soft skills for effective communication and negotiation; and reflected on how to tailor community action to the COVID-19 context.



New Training on ENGAGE-TB

World Health Organization

WHO's ENGAGE-TB is an innovative approach.

This training offers a **unique learning experience** to better identify and treat people with TB. ENGAGE-TB aims to strengthen integrated TB services at the community level, improve the reach and sustainability of TB interventions, and shift the global perspective of TB from only a medical illness to a broader socioeconomic, community issue.

What are the training objectives?

- Introduce and **unpack** the ENGAGE-TB approach.
- Improve **stakeholder engagement** in the implementation and delivery of integrated community-based TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care.

What methodology is used?

The training is delivered in two different phases:

- Online self-paced training (6 modules of 20 minutes each)

An interactive and participatory methodology to encourage experience sharing and peer-to-peer learning. This innovative approach enables participants to learn about technical content, principles, and the dos and don'ts of ENGAGE-TB with the common goal of ending TB.

What will I be able to do?

- Adapt the **ENGAGE-TB approach** to different settings
- Engage stakeholders through interactive exercises for **community-based TB service delivery**
- Develop and use soft skills for **effective communication and negotiation**
- Communicate virtually and tailor **community action** to the COVID-19 context

Who participates in this training?

- **Civil society and affected community** representatives, consultants, implementers, national TB programmes, technical, and financial partners
- **Anybody interested** in integrated community-based services that tackle TB

Meet the facilitators!

- ITCILO experts from the Learning Innovation Programme
- Learning and development consultants from Infinity Unconventional Education
- WHO Global TB Programme focal points for ENGAGE-TB

What certification will I receive?

A certificate of participation upon completion of the learning modules and participation in the face-to-face and/or facilitated virtual trainings.

When does it begin?

Please contact ENGAGE-TB@who.int to find out about the next edition.

How do I apply?

- Submit a CV and motivation letter

***Priority given to implementers from high TB-burden countries and technical assistance providers

Who will cover the cost of my training?

- Participation in the training is self-funded (e.g. grants or other sources).
- Limited financial support is available for those in constrained settings and/or TB survivors.

Contact
ENGAGE-TB@who.int

Implemented by **ITC**
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THE END TB STRATEGY: PILLARS AND PRINCIPLES



PILLAR 1

INTEGRATED, PATIENT-CENTRED TB CARE AND PREVENTION

► Task Force representative facilitates uptake of new rapid diagnostics and drug-resistant TB treatment, 9 July 2020, virtual event

Ezio Távora dos Santos Filho provided the civil society perspective at a special webinar organized by WHO focused on providing key updates to new, recently-released WHO guidelines on rapid diagnostics and drug-resistant TB treatment, in order to facilitate better understanding of the guidance and so enable its rapid uptake by countries and stakeholders. Rapid uptake of the new guidance is seen as essential to achieving the targets of the political declaration of the UN high-level meeting and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as this translates to earlier access to quality diagnosis and treatment and better outcomes for the millions affected by TB and drug-resistant TB.



► Task Force contributes to the new definition of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, 27 January 2021

Meeting report of the WHO expert consultation on the definition of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, 27-29 October 2020



World Health Organization


WHO has revised the definition of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) and also newly defined pre-XDR-TB, highlighting the seriousness of these forms of TB. These new definitions will help to define more precisely groups of persons with TB who require complex treatment regimens; they are also expected to lead to better reporting, surveillance and monitoring in countries.

The definitions were updated in October 2020 following a consultation convened by WHO's Global TB Programme that brought together over 70 participants, representing countries, bilateral and multilateral agencies, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and academia. Jamilya Ismoilova participated and contributed to this work on behalf of the Task Force.

PILLAR 2

BOLD POLICIES AND SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS

- ▶ **Task Force TB-survivor voice enriches the special mini-meet of the Working Group on Public-Private Mix for TB Prevention and Care, 20 May 2021, virtual event**



The image shows a virtual meeting interface for the 'PUBLIC-PRIVATE MIX (PPM) WORKING GROUP MINI-MEET'. On the left, there is a large circular logo with colorful segments and a central figure. The main area displays several video call windows with participants. One window shows a woman with glasses, and another shows a man with glasses. The background is blue with the meeting title in white text.

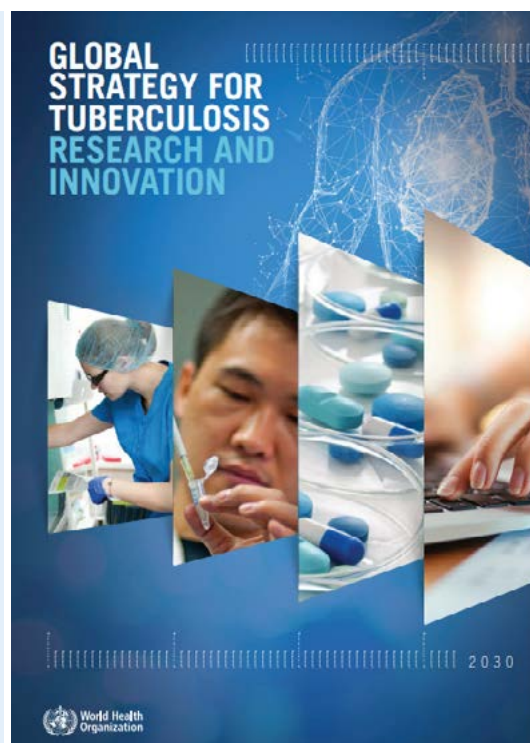
Paran Winarni, who has had TB twice, provided her testimony on the sub-standard care she was receiving in the private sector on her path to TB cure, advocating for more coordinated efforts to ensure quality care in the private sector with stronger engagement of affected communities and civil society.

PILLAR 3

INTENSIFIED RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

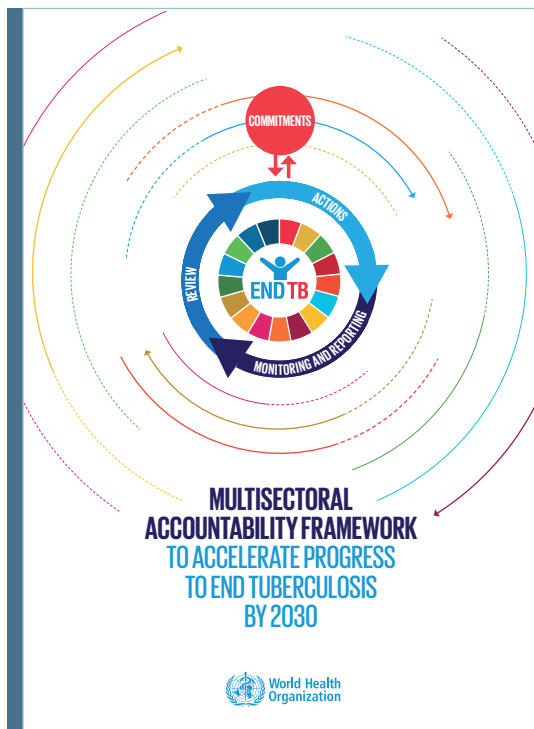
- ▶ **Member States adopt the Global Strategy for Tuberculosis Research and Innovation, developed with inputs from the Task Force at the 73rd session of the World Health Assembly, 10 August 2020, virtual event**

The Global Strategy was developed under the leadership of WHO through a consultative process with Member States, stakeholders, the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Tuberculosis, the WHO Global TB Research Task Force, representatives of civil society and affected communities, and research funding institutions. Four major areas for action are highlighted in the Strategy: creating an enabling environment for TB research and innovation; increasing financial investments in TB research and innovation; promoting and improving approaches to data sharing; and promoting equitable access to the benefits of research and innovation. In the spirit of fast-tracking efforts to end TB, a prerequisite for success is that all stakeholders make concerted efforts and collaborate through a unified and aligned response in which key national and international partners and affected communities promote partnerships that are necessary for accelerating innovation.



BOOSTING MULTISECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

► **Task Force collaborates with WHO to produce a tool for national assessments of civil society engagement for the Multisectoral Accountability Framework for TB (MAF-TB), 8 April 2020**



The Task Force collaborated closely with WHO to produce a tool for assessing the engagement of civil society and communities within the national checklist for the MAF-TB baseline assessment (“Annex 2”). The checklist aims to enable Member States and their partners to assess the status of work at the national level to strengthen accountability to the End TB Strategy, principally: national commitments made, actions taken on those commitments, monitoring and reporting approaches, and the nature of any high-level review mechanisms. The checklist was developed in response to stakeholder requests as a tool to support the adaptation and implementation of the WHO Multisectoral Accountability Framework released in 2019. It also responds to the UN General Assembly’s request to WHO to ensure implementation of the Framework. The Task Force has been supporting countries and civil society partners in using the Checklist and the Annex 2 tool.

[Access the Framework here](#)



MAF-TB - Checklist Annexes

Annex 2: Engagement of civil society and affected communities in the 4 components of multisectoral accountability to end TB at country level

I. COMMITMENTS	Yes	No	Notes or Comments	Note any performance indicator(s) set
<p>Have national commitments been declared formally on engagement of civil society and affected communities in line with the following commitments made by the Members of World Health Assembly and the United Nations General Assembly:</p> <p>a) Commitment to the overarching principle in the End TB Strategy of “<i>a strong coalition with civil society organizations and communities,</i>” as well as the 2nd Pillar of the End TB Strategy on Bold Policies and Systems including “<i>Engagement of communities, civil society organizations, and public and private care providers</i>” (WHA67 resolution adopting the Global Strategy and targets for tuberculosis prevention, care and control after 2015 -- The End TB Strategy)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If yes, note the relevant document(s) where national commitments have been articulated. If formal commitments are in process of being set in a document/decreed, please note expected process.</p>	

[Access the Checklist here](#)

► **Task Force member as the champions of support for multisectoral action, 18 December 2020, virtual event**

Yuliya Chorna joined the special webinar on implementation of the Multisectoral Accountability Framework to Accelerate Progress to End TB by 2030 (MAF-TB). In her speech, Yuliya voiced the role civil society plays in stimulating the discussion at country level about multisectoral collaboration and spoke about some of the key challenges to date and how these have been addressed. Since the launch of MAF-TB in 2019, WHO has been supporting countries to adapt and use the Framework to translate commitments into actions and to monitor, report, and review progress, with the engagement of high-level leadership, all relevant sectors, civil society and other stakeholders. The webinar featured key speakers from countries, regions, partners and civil society who discussed progress and shared experiences on MAF-TB implementation.



► **Continued push for strong civil society engagement in multisectoral accountability efforts, 5 May 2021, virtual event**

Yuliya Chorna also joined the second webinar on the progress made in implementing WHO’s MAF-TB. This event showcased collaborative actions across United Nations agencies towards ending TB, demonstrating action to reach global targets and implement the priority recommendations of the UN Secretary General 2020 Progress Report on TB. Yuliya shared her experience in supporting multisectoral action in priority countries in the European Region through strong engagement of civil society and affected communities.



► **Civil society meaningfully engaged in multisectoral accountability efforts in Europe**

In cooperation with TB Europe Coalition and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Yuliya Chorna is the team lead of the regional support on operationalization and country context adaptation of the MAF-TB checklist for national assessment and its Annex 2 on civil society engagement. Achievements include the development of guidance on developing analytical reports to document the outcomes of in-country assessments and regional recommendations using the Annex 2/Baseline Assessment Checklist of the WHO Multisectoral Accountability Framework for TB (MAF-TB), with Yuliya as a co-author; as part of the TB Europe Coalition regional support team, Yuliya provided support for country-level civil society assessments using the MAF-TB Checklist/Annex 2 for Belarus, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine. Lastly, Yuliya was closely involved in the finalization of a reference guide for civil society and TB affected communities covering background, essentials and key actions “Unpacking multisectoral collaboration and accountability in the End TB Response”.

STRENGTHENING THE WHO GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

2018 STAG-TB RECOMMENDATION

In 2018, the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Tuberculosis (STAG-TB) recommended a strengthened process and transparency of selection of civil society and affected-community representatives for guideline development groups


WHO CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE RESPONSE

WHO has put in place a new procedure to strengthen the selection of members for relevant guideline development groups:

For each new TB-related guideline, the secretariat for the Task Force issues a call for expressions of interest, and then collates and disseminates a list of affected-community representatives suggested for membership. This list is passed to the Guideline Development Group secretariat, which then makes a final decision based on the declarations of interest and factors published in the terms of reference.

► Update of WHO guidelines on systematic screening for tuberculosis disease, June-October 2020, virtual meetings

WHO convened a guideline development group to examine the new evidence in order to update the 2013 guidelines on systematic screening for active tuberculosis. The group met in virtual sessions between June and October 2020 and formulated several new recommendations related to TB screening. Task Force representative Amir Khan participated in the meetings and actively contributed to the guidelines development process. The new guidelines were released in March 2021, alongside an operational handbook.

 [Access the document here](#)

WHO
consolidated
guidelines on
tuberculosis

Module 2: Screening
Systematic screening for
tuberculosis disease



► **New WHO guideline on nucleic acid amplification tests to detect TB and drug-resistant TB, 7-18 December 2020, virtual meeting**

The guideline development process focused on the update to WHO policies on molecular assays used for the diagnosis of TB and drug-resistant TB, and to introduce new technologies for molecular diagnosis, including centralized automated drug susceptibility testing, XDR-TB assays, and hybridization-based technologies for pyrazinamide resistance detection. Blessi Kumar represented the task force, actively contributing to the deliberations and outcomes.



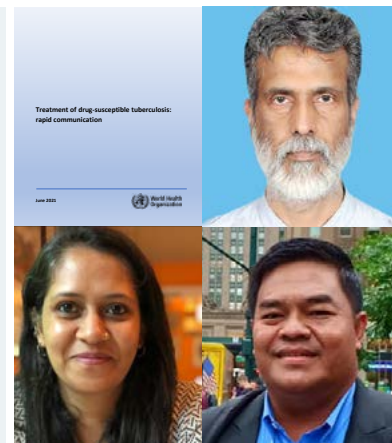
► **Webinar on WHO TB Policy Guidance Outlook for 2021 benefited from Task Force perspective, 16 March 2021, virtual event**

Ezio Tavora dos Santos Filho spoke at this webinar aimed at providing an overview of planned updates to WHO TB policy guidance in 2021, promoting an exchange of views on how to effectively address emerging country needs for policy, and deliberating on key actions needed to enhance the implementation and evaluation of global TB policy guidance. The event brought together policymakers and programme implementers, TB-affected communities and their coalitions, community-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, donor and funding institutions, scientists and research institutes.

► **Task Force contributes to updated WHO guidelines on the treatment of drug-susceptible tuberculosis, April 2021**

Amir Khan, Aneeta Pasha and Choub Sok Chamreun assisted with a survey of patient values and preferences that was used to inform a meeting of the Guideline Development Group on updated WHO guidelines on the treatment of drug-susceptible TB. The survey was completed by 37 patients and TB survivors from Pakistan and Cambodia, confirming their preference for shortened treatment, but this value was rooted in other factors too, such as the risk of relapse, adverse effects, and pill burden. In addition, Amir joined the Guideline Development Group and contributed to the review of evidence and formulation of the new recommendations.

A rapid communication arising from this Guideline Development Group meeting was released by WHO's Global TB Programme in June 2021.



► **Update of WHO guidelines on the management of tuberculosis in children and adolescents secures the Task Force input, May-December 2021**

The Guideline Development Group met online in a series of sessions in May and June 2021, with inputs from Amir Khan, who was nominated by the Task Force in view of his interest and strong experience in the topic. The guidelines update process is further informed by the external review group at various stages of the guideline development process, including the final peer review. Nyan Win Phyo is participating in the work of this group. The guidelines will be released in late 2021.



LOOKING AHEAD

In early 2021, the Civil Society Task Force (CSTF) workplan 2021-2022 was produced. The process included joint discussion on the priorities suggested by the civil society members. Based on these discussions, a draft workplan was jointly produced. This was subsequently shared with the Global TB Programme staff for input. The finalized workplan has been shared with WHO regional offices for their information and further action on strengthening collaboration with civil society and affected communities, in line with the regional priorities and vision.

THE MAIN BROAD THEMES OF THE WORKPLAN ARE:



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES IN EACH OF THE THEMES:

Task Force operations

- ✔ Systematizing use of social media (Task Force hashtags)
- ✔ Yearly progress report; monthly calls; monitoring level of engagement (from information sharing to meaningful partnership)

Accelerating the progress on the UN Secretary-General's 10 priorities

- ✔ New indicators for tracking community and civil society engagement will be part of a new WHO strategy for community engagement in TB care and prevention with input from the Task Force
- ✔ Data on new indicators will be collected and published

Ensuring meaningful engagement with WHO at all levels and boosting engagement with national programmes

- ✔ Include Task Force inputs into 1) the revised WHO guidance on national strategic plan development and toolkit and 2) new WHO guidance on programmatic reviews
- ✔ Regular engagement with WHO regional offices and existing networks
- ✔ Engagement with civil society groups focusing on TB-determinants and comorbidities

Strong engagement in TB guideline development and research at global and country levels

- ✔ Engage the Task Force in selection of community representatives on WHO TB-related research committee and guideline development groups
- ✔ Raise visibility of community-led research and innovations

Engagement in MAF-TB processes

- ✔ Task Force will contribute to the planned "how-to" MAF-TB tool and the case studies
- ✔ Task Force will provide input in the revision of civil society Annex 2 to the MAF-TB baseline checklist

Innovation and civil society engagement in COVID-19 and TB responses

- ✔ Task Force will engage in evidence gathering on innovations to scale up and sustain effective practices of civil society and communities



CONTACT:

GLOBAL TB PROGRAMME
World Health Organization
www.who.int/tb

Civil Society Task Force on TB – Secretariat
Lana Syed (syedl@who.int)



**World Health
Organization**