

REPORT
**On International Conference “HIV Epidemic in Central Asia and Neighboring Countries:
Surveillance Approaches and Challenges for Control and Prevention”**

Location: Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, Vefa Center

Date: March 11-13, 2008

Aim of the conference: experience sharing on the implementation of the WHO-recommended second-generation sentinel surveillance over HIV/AIDS cases.

Conference participants: Health ministries representatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan; non-governmental and international organizations representatives working in the field of HIV infection prevention as well as the staff of the conference organizers: Central Asia AIDS Control project, CDC/CAR and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); neighboring countries representatives (Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India).



Prepared materials (in Russian and English): program, conference participants list, press announce and press release, invitation letter to the Conference participants on behalf of Health ministries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as NGO and International organizations-organizers of the Conference.

All presentation were made during the first day of the conference in the form of separate brochure; and during the last day they were handed round on CDs.

The conference was opened by:

- Mr. Nur uluu Dosbol, Vice Prime Minister of Kyrgyz Republic
- Dr. Marat Mambetov, Minister of Health of Kyrgyzstan
- Ambassador Mari Yovanovich, U.S Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan
- Mr. Roger Robinson, Country Manager, WBCO in KG
- Dr. Irina Savtchenko, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Central Asia
- Mr. Bill Frey, Regional Director of USAID
- Dr. Tilek S. Meimanaliev, Executive Director of CAAP
- Dr. Weber Urban Fund Portfolio Manager The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Dr. Belonog A.A., Head of the State Epidemiology Committee, State Sanitarium Chief-Doctor of Kazakhstan
- Dr. Michael Favorov, Director of CDC/Central Asia



The conference consisted of plenary session at which heads of the Republican AIDS Centers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan made their presentations on HIV and

AIDS epidemiological situation in their countries, prevention measures carried out in the frame of the National HIV and AIDS HIV epidemic counteraction programs implementation.

In course of the International conference conducting SS results for 2004-2006 were presented on six surveillance groups: injection drug users (IDU), sexual workers (SW), men having sex with men (MSM), prisoners, patients with sexual transmitted diseases (STD) and pregnant women. These results were prepared by the specialist of AIDS prevention services from of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Two chair persons presided over each plenary session, coordinating the course of sessions conducting and making necessary comments during questions and answers sessions.

During the conference six thematic working groups were established:

- Group № 1 - HIV SS in Central Asia. Participants: AIDS Centers Directors (city, district and republican); epidemiologists from new pilot sites, NGOs and International organizations representatives.
- Group № 2 - Strengthening Laboratory Diagnostic Capacity Participants: laboratory assistants, NGOs and International organizations representatives.
- Group № 3 – HIV/AIDS Treatment Aspects Participants: Health centers departments doctors, NGOs and International organizations representatives.
- Group № 4 – The needs of the NGO in Prevention activity to cut down the widespread the HIV in Central Asia Region Participants: NGOs representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, International organizations representatives
- Group № 5 - HIV/AIDS Surveillance - Translating data into action Participants: AIDS Centers Directors, epidemiologists, NGO and international organizations representatives
- Group № 6 - Implementation of new technique in HIV/AIDS surveillance practice Participants: epidemiologists having introduced SS in 2004-2006, NGO and international organizations representatives



From the first working day, the conference was held in a form of active discussion between the conference participants. Open and active dialogue took place. The participants discussed actual issues of HIV and AIDS epidemic counteraction commitments carrying out taken by CA countries.

Conference participants and guests showed keen lively interest to the presentations on HIV infection outbreak among children in Chimkent (Kazakhstan, 2006) and Osh (Kyrgyz Republic, 2007). Crucial issues of HIV epidemiological situation in the countries and region in general were also actively discussed. Thus, it was particularly noted that in spite of injection way of HIV transmission in CA countries, cases of sexual transmission of HIV infection are growing year by year. In this regard, the necessary of strengthening prophylactic measures on HIV transmission from mother to child as well as from child to mother was emphasized. As it was pointed out in one of the reports, the fact of possible mother contracting from HIV infected child were on record at Chimkent outbreak investigation. Though, this problem needs to be investigated more thoroughly.

The issues of ARV therapy use and especially treatment scheme using in the countries were discussed by the clinical physicians. The speakers repeatedly emphasized the idea of ARV therapy adherence issues need special attention.

Special participants' attention was paid to the laboratory researches quality control issues, since every analysis result can be personified and in case of HIV positive result a person has to live with diagnosis till the end of the life.

Among the reports made by the conference participants from the neighboring countries of CA region, special attention was concentrated on the report presented by the participant from India. He spoke about epidemiological surveillance over HIV infection cases conducting in India. According to the information from the report, sexual transmission of HIV infection is 85% from the total number of newly registered HIV contracting while injection way of transmission is 1.8%. Meanwhile injection way of HIV transmission prevails in all CA countries.



Two presentations were made by the CAAP specialists: CAAP Executive director, Prof. Tilek Meimanaliev made presentation on “Strengthening of regional and national cooperation and capacity building in efforts to HIV and AIDS control and prevention in Central Asia”. The second report on Regional Knowledge Hub for treatment, care and support of PLWHA promotion was made by regional public health specialist, Mrs. Tatyana Surdina.

Opinions sharing on SS issues took place both during plenary sessions and in the conference lobby. The participants exchanged the addresses, information materials taken for distribution. The participants of the conference highly estimated both conference organization and issues put on agenda: prevention programs organization and conducting, ARV therapy issues and HIV/AIDS cases laboratory diagnosis. The expediency and timeliness of this event carrying out was specially pointed out.

The **Resolution** was adopted as a result of the conference. Proposals and recommendation made in course of the thematic working groups sessions became the basis of the resolution. Some comments were included in the Resolution draft at the last session. The decision to send the Resolution draft to the National AIDS Centers directors for its thorough studying making amendments and additions was taken. This mission was entrusted on CDC HIV and AIDS Group Leader, Mr. Baurzhan Zhusupov, who will collect all the recommendations, agree the document and add them into the final version. Then the Resolution will be signed by the National AIDS Center directors of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for its further submission as guidance.

Information coverage:

Conducting the International Conference “HIV Epidemic in Central Asia and Neighboring Countries: Surveillance Approaches and Challenges for Control and Prevention” became a big regional event in the field of practical health care in the countries of CA region and attracted attention of the Mass Media not only from Kyrgyz Republic but from all Central Asia as well as accredited journalists from the number of international information agencies such as Reuters (UK), Interfax, ITAR-TASS (Russia), Radio DW (Germany), the BBC Radio (UK), Radio Liberty (Kyrgyz and Central-Asian services). More than 20 reports/articles about the conference were broadcast/published by Mass Media in all the countries of the region.



Press conference was organized for the journalists on the first day of the conference (March 11) with participation of the following speakers:

Dr. Marat Mambetov, Minister of Health of Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Thomas Delaney, USAID Regional Mission Deputy Director

Dr. Irina Savtchenko, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Central Asia

Mr. Bill Frey, Regional Director of USAID

Dr. Tilek Meimanaliev, Executive Director of CAAP

Dr. Weber Urban Fund Portfolio Manager, GFATM

Dr. Belonog A.A., Head of the State Epidemiology Committee, State Sanitarium Chief-Doctor of Kazakhstan

Dr. Michael Favorov, Director of CDC/Central Asia

The journalists of the main leading TV stations of the Kyrgyz Republic: NTRC, PIRAMIDA, 5th Channel, NTC; national radio, Radio Azzatyk, Radio Manas; newspapers: “Vetcherny Bishkek”, “Slovo Kyrgyzstana”, “Komsomolskaya Pravda-Kyrgyzstan”, “MSN”, “The Times of central Asia”; information agencies: AKI-PRESS, 24kg, Reuters and Kabar attended the conference.



The press conference was opened by Minister of health of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Marat Mambetov. He expressed his satisfaction with a fact that this conference was conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic. The participants expressed their certainty that joint efforts will reduce HIV epidemic level in the Central Asian countries. They stressed that strengthening of regional cooperation, epidemiology specialists experience exchange, expanding of sentinel surveillance zone coverage in four countries of the region, coordination of

the international organizations efforts in the area of HIV epidemic counteraction and support of the National HIV and AIDS counteraction and prevention programs play important role. Journalists also got the information regarding the measures undertaken to stop the HIV infection outbreak in Osh district of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On March 13, 2008, National TV and radio broadcasting company organized the alive broadcasting with the participation on the CAAP Executive director, Prof. Tilek Meimanaliev; GFATM Portfolio Manager, Mr. V. Chernyavsky and General Director za the Republican AIDS Union, Mr. S. Mamatov.

The participants spoke about the results of the conference, conducting measures and grant programs. The importance of such international conferences conducting for specialists sanitarium and epidemiological services of the ministries of health, NGOs and international organizations of CA countries was specially underlined.