MINUTES OF THE TB COUNTRY DIALOGUE: March 21, 2013

Under the lead of a civil society organization referred FIS (For Social Impacts In Social Heath) and in partnership with National Stop TB Partners and NTP, 60 participants from the NTP, civil society organizations, WHO country office, International Organizations and the private sector meet in Yaoundé-Cameroon, March 21, 2013, as part of a Country Dialogue to explore sustainability initiatives to support TB in Cameroon.

At the opening ceremony, FIS leader, Mr Bertrand Kampoer, welcomed this historic moment when stakeholders have decided to voluntarily come together to support the fight against TB in Cameroon, each bringing its resources and expertise. Following this speech, the Permanent Secretary of the NTP, Dr. Jean Louis Abena deplored the lack of attention to the fight against TB in Cameroon and has called for greater collaboration between different actors, which will significantly increase case detection and treatment success rate. Completing his remarks, he scored all his support to the initiative of an exploratory meeting for a formal Stop TB Partnership Cameroon.

During deliberations, participants recognized progress made in the fight against TB in Cameroon, including cure rate (76%) and case detection (86%) approaching Stop TB targets. The 11 presentations and discussions during this occasion helped to recognize the following issues that will weaken national objectives of the fight against TB, namely:

• Improper use of BCG vaccine to adults by some health facilities despite formal recommendations of National Immunization Programme and NTP guidelines.

• A lack of coverage of TB cares activities in prisons. Since 2007, on 74 prisons, only 10 are currently covered by GIZ. The Global Fund R9 support will contribute to reduce gap, but additional efforts are needed.

• Despite Ministry of Health guidelines, management of HIV / TB co-infection in health facilities according to WHO guidelines is not systematic.

• According to NTP, demand for TB diagnosis in most cases remains on medical doctor requirement. Very few people voluntarily attend clinic for TB diagnosis. In fact, currently 25.125 cases reported in 2012 are well below the true burden of disease in Cameroon.

• The fight against TB is under-funded. The only contributors included the State and the Global Fund.

• A lack of collaboration between civil society actors involved in the fight against TB, and NTP.

To address these challenges, participants reflected on the working group. Six groups were formed, and the following recommendations were made:
• Encourage private sector to increase its contribution to the financing of TB in Cameroon through a quote part mechanism.

• Working with the media in reinforcing their knowledge on TB and provide them with evidence that will help them raise awareness about TB.

• Strengthen collaboration and partnership between NTP and national stakeholders working on TB for a shared vision and collaborative strategies for achieving national target on the fight against TB.

• Encourage all health agencies to associate TB in their agenda and implement strategies and opportunities for information sharing and exchange of experience.

• Advocate for the State to increase funding related to tuberculosis, mobilize mayors to local funding in the fight against TB, and implement innovative mechanisms for private sector contribution.

• Finalize the process of «STOP TB Partnership Cameroon » and set up a core group, including NTP, WHO and CSOs. This core group will be responsible for the next steps, including finalize membership; propose a work plan and resource mobilization. The secretariat of this core group will be provided by NGO FIS, the main organizer of this Country Dialogue.

After the discussions, participants have largely approved further concrete actions to finalize «Stop TB Partnership Cameroon," and recommended establishment of a core group. NTP and WHO have confirmed their commitment to be part. Transparent and inclusive consultations will be larger in the coming weeks for the representation of other stakeholders in the core group and finalization of this process.

The NGO FIS will host secretariat of «Stop TB Partnership Cameroon» and its Executive Director Mr Bertrand Kampoer will be the focal point. Their main task will be to finalize this process by continuing to create new voluntary membership, coordinate recruitment of core group members, and working in partnership with NTP and WHO country office for the development of the action plan and the mobilization of resources. The NGO FIS will find ways to organize the first meeting of the core group within the next three months.

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