

2006: Global Tuberculosis Control (in South Caucasus)

KfW Regional Conference on Tuberculosis Control in South Caucasus - Tbilisi, Georgia, 27-28 November 2006.



Foto: Participants in the plenum of the TB Conference, Tbilisi 27-28 November 2006

To fight tuberculosis (TB) is the most challenging issue to achieve better health conditions in the South Caucasus region. Economic downturn since independence in 1991 and armed conflicts resulting in internal displacements and refugee crises worsened living conditions and led to re-emergence of the TB disease in the region. In the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU) the existence of drug-resistant TB is the highest in the world. Since all FSU countries are dealing with the same problems in the fight against tuberculosis German development cooperation pursues a regional approach in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Since 2003, the German Federal Government has supported national tuberculosis control programmes under the Caucasus initiative in the context of German Financial Cooperation (FC). Germany is a key partner in these countries in establishing and scaling up contemporary TB control interventions based on the internationally recommended DOTS strategy of the World Health Organisation. The regional programme in South Caucasus aims at developing national capacities for breaking the chain of TB infection and diminishing the socio-economic impact of the disease.

A regional conference on the subject of tuberculosis control in South Caucasus organised by the KfW Entwicklungsbank (KfW development bank) was held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 27 and 28 November 2006. The conference was chaired by First Lady of Georgia, Sandra Elizabeth Roelofs, Tuberculosis Ambassador of the Global Stop TB Partnership. The conference was attended by high-ranking representatives from the South Caucasian Ministry of Health, as coordinating body of the National Tuberculosis Programmes (NTPs), as well as representatives from national and international organisations (among others, WHO, ICRC, GFATM, USAID, KNCV, PIH) involved in tuberculosis control. The development of the TB epidemic in South Caucasus was evaluated during the conference and the participants analysed the achievements of and problems in TB control in the three countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the effectiveness of the NTPs. They discussed the next steps to be taken in the national programmes as well as the perspectives for further external assistance in the region. Among a variety of topics debated at the conference, special attention was placed on the need to mobilise financial, human and infrastructure resources to rapidly scale-up surveillance, diagnosis and treatment of drug-resistant TB cases.



Foto: Mrs. Roelofs, Ambassador of the Global Stop TB Partnership, First Lady of Georgia; Dr Patricia Flor, German Ambassador in Georgia; Dr Elsever Agayev, Deputy Minister of Health of Azerbaijan; Dr George Tsereteli, Chairman, Parliamentary Committee for Health and Social Issues, Georgia.

The country delegations and representatives of international agencies valued highly the role played by the German government in streamlining TB control programmes in the region. Commenting on the outcome of the consultations with the country delegations held during the conference, Jürgen Zoll, Deputy Head of the Central Asia and Caucasus Division in German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), assured in his wrap-up speech that the German government was committed to consolidating the achievements of the regional programme.

The conference is seen as an important step to further strengthen the partnership in tuberculosis control in the South Caucasus region and help the countries progress towards achieving TB control targets and disease-related Millennium Development Goals.

Original-URL:

http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN_Home/Topics/Health/Events/Global_Tuberculosis_Control/index.jsp