



Ministry of Health
of the Republic of Belarus



REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE GRANT OF THE GLOBAL FUND
TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

**“STRENGTHENING SUPPORT TO THE
VULNERABLE GROUPS AND THE POPULATION
AT LARGE UNDER THE NATIONAL
TB CONTROL STRATEGY OF BELARUS”**

IMPLEMENTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

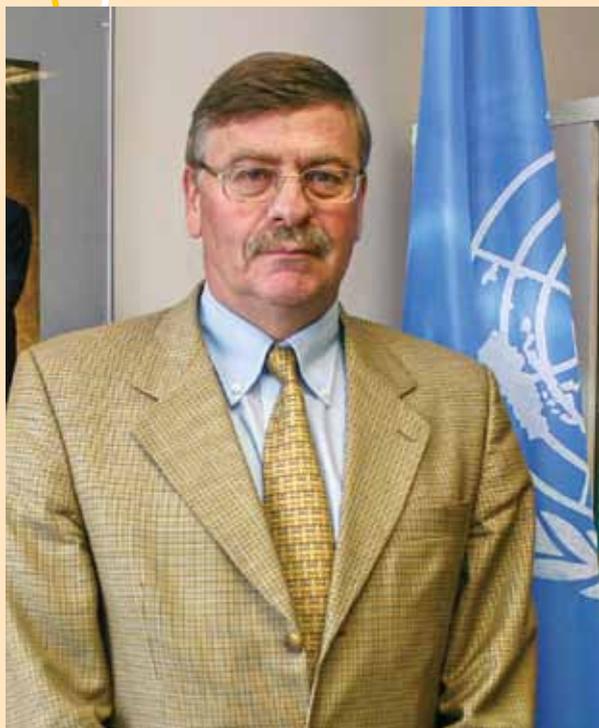
1 October 2008 – 31 December 2009

Minsk 2010

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INTRODUCTION



Today, I have the honour to present the Report on implementation of the Global Fund Tuberculosis Grant, targeted at strengthening the National efforts to prevent the spread of tuberculosis in Belarus. Today tuberculosis affects not only people with a poor quality of life, but the population at large, posing a threat to the health of our children. The spread of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) in the country raises a particular concern. Tuberculosis is also a common opportunistic co-infection that affects people living with HIV.

UNDP, together with its partners from the Ministry of Health and TB institutions, can be truly proud of the outcomes achieved during the implementation of the Grant. Among our most notable successes I would highlight the progress we have made in training medical staff, modernising the TB laboratory facilities and introducing the National TB Register. The financial resources of the Global Fund Grant were also used for the purchase of modern laboratory equipment and quality assured anti-TB drugs, as well as strengthening social support services for TB patients. All of this led to a substantial improvement in the quality of the TB treatment and services. As a result of the successful implementation of Phase 1 of the current Grant, the Global Fund has approved funding for Phase 2, and the application of Belarus for financial support of MDR TB treatment within the Round 9 has also been given the GF endorsement. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Global Fund and all those who contributed to the Grant implementation and the achievement of so many important results. I am confident our joint efforts will continue to grow stronger, and contribute to new successes in combating tuberculosis.

Antonius Broek

UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident
Representative in Belarus

Tuberculosis is one of the most socially relevant and urgent healthcare issues today. According to the World Health Organization about one third of the population of the planet – 2 billion people – are infected with mycobacteria tuberculosis and are at risk of getting the disease. Every year active tuberculosis develops in over eight million people, and around two million die of this disease.

There is evidence of the growing number of multidrug resistant (MDR) tuberculosis cases.

TB Grant is the first large-scale Grant in our country with international financing, which addresses tuberculosis issues.

We can already speak of a certain measure of success. Over 4 000 specialists were trained in modern methods of treatment and diagnosis of tuberculosis, also including drug resistant forms. Additionally, necessary equipment was purchased for 41 bacteriological laboratories.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection significantly increases the risk of tuberculosis, which is why over 98% of TB patients were tested for HIV. The cumulative number of HIV/TB coinfection cases increased from 222 cases in January 2005 up to 998 cases in January last year.

The system of supervised outpatient treatment under direct observation by healthcare personnel has been implemented in TB treatment institutions. To ensure adherence to treatment social support was provided to over 3 400 patients in the form of grocery sets and travel passes.

Annual awareness raising campaign "I Can Stop Tuberculosis» is ongoing in the country. The white camomile - the symbol of the fight against this disease - has become the emblem of this campaign.



We are continuing our work in this area and we believe that joint proactive efforts of all interested organisations on a national and international level as well as individual efforts are the guarantee of resolving the problem of tuberculosis in our country.

Robert A. Chasnoit

First Deputy Minister of Health of the
Republic of Belarus
National Coordinator of the TB Grant

GRANT'S SUMMARY

MAIN DONOR	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
PRINCIPLE RECIPIENT	United Nations Development Programme in the Republic of Belarus
GRANT ID AND TITLE	Strengthening Support to the Vulnerable Groups and the Population at Large under the National TB Control Strategy of Belarus Grant BLR-607-G02-T
GRANT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	1 October 2007 – 30 September 2012
GRANT AMOUNT	USD 13 379 111*
REPORTING PERIOD	1 October 2008 – 31 December 2009

* The amount represents the final budget as approved by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria upon Phase II review. The initial upper ceiling amount approved for 5 years was USD 14 214 021.

Grant Beneficiaries:

- TB institutions of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus;
- Patients of TB institutions who get access to up-to-date diagnostics and treatment of tuberculosis;
- Inmates of penitentiary institutions;
- HIV positive people;
- High risk population groups;
- Healthcare personnel of TB institutions and departments;
- Personnel of bacteriological laboratories;
- Primary health care workers;
- Medical personnel of healthcare facilities of the penitentiary system;
- Population in general.

The main objective of Grant implementation is to reduce spread of tuberculosis among the population, in risk groups such as convicts, people released from reformatory institutions, homeless people, etc. Main areas of Grant implementation are as follows:

- Improvement of TB notification rate (by means of microscopy and culture tests);
- Modernization of laboratory service to meet WHO standards;
- Implementation of the National "Tuberculosis" Register;
- Providing observed outpatient treatment to over 2 000 patients along with providing social support (grocery sets and travel passes) aiming to ensure patients' adherence to treatment;
- Providing 3 730 TB patients with first line antituberculosis drugs annually;
- Integration of DOTS therapy by healthcare personnel into the national healthcare system and enhancement of the capacity of the National Reference Laboratory, which allows quality testing of susceptible and MDR tuberculosis;
- Implementation of the up-to-date treatment regimen for multidrug resistant tuberculosis in line with WHO recommendations;
- Providing 200 MDR TB patients with drugs.

GRANT'S SUMMARY

Within the reporting period (1 October 2008 – 31 December 2009) the principle recipient along with the TB Service of the country and the Belarusian Red Cross Society successfully achieved the planned programmatic and financial targets of the Grant. Out of 12 programme indicators 10 were achieved in full or exceeded and 2 indicators were partially achieved. For example, the program indicator "Providing 7 460 TB patients with high quality first line TB drugs during the first two years of Grant implementation" was partially achieved at a level of 59 per cent. Due to the delay in the supply of first line drugs in 2008 the enrolment of patients for drug treatment started only in December 2008. However by 31 December 2009 as many as 3,674 patients were enrolled for therapy. Since May 2009 a pilot project on treatment of 200 MDR TB patients has been successfully implemented. In October 2009 based on the outcomes of the mission by the WHO Green Light Committee to assess the potential of the Belarusian TB service as regards treatment of MDR tuberculosis, approval was granted for treatment of the second cohort of 200 MDR TB patients with reserve line drugs funded by the Grant. Interventions to deliver medical care and social support to TB patients have been successfully implemented in 20 TB institutions of the country. Since the Grant was launched, social support has been provided to 3 411 patients. Financial delivery for the stated period (1 October 2008 – 31 December 2009) amounted to 99 per cent of the budget.



MAIN OUTPUTS OF THE GRANT IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN PHASE ONE (01.10.2007 – 01.10.2009)

- During the reporting period Cooperation Agreements were signed with 11 sub-recipients;
- 4 153 healthcare specialists were trained in modern methods of treatment and diagnosis of tuberculosis;
- 3 411 patients of TB institutions received therapy under direct supervision by healthcare personnel along with social support (provision with grocery sets and free travel passes in order to ensure the adherence of the patients to the daily intake of anti-TB drugs);
- New TB registration and reporting forms in line with WHO requirements were integrated into the healthcare system;
- Paper based TB register was implemented, which has been successfully operating in 29 tuberculosis dispensaries in the country;
- National "Tuberculosis" register has been developed and is being implemented;
- On 1 March 2008 "I Can Stop Tuberculosis" awareness raising campaign was launched, white camomile became the symbol of the campaign;
- Equipment was purchased for 41 bacteriological laboratories;
- Application for the treatment of MDR TB patients was approved by the Green Light Committee;
- 200 MDR TB patients have been receiving treatment with second line anti-TB drugs;
- 3 674 patients received treatment with first line anti-TB drugs;
- Clinical Guidelines on TB Treatment in line with WHO requirements have been elaborated and approved by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus.



FINANCIAL DELIVERY FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2008 – 31 DECEMBER 2009, USD

Types of expenses	Budget	Expenses	Delivery, per cent
Expenses of the principle recipient including centralized procurement	3 427 398	3 277 859,92	96%
Money transfers to sub-recipients	485 696	612 569,08	126%
TOTAL	3 913 095	3 890 429	99%

Components	Budget	Actual expenses*	Delivery, per cent
Component 1: Support to antituberculosis activities in the system of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus	1 888 946	2 017 732	107%
Component 2: Improvement of the epidemiological surveillance and monitoring in the system of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus in order to fight tuberculosis spread in the Republic of Belarus	68 671	135 695	198%
Component 3: Support to antituberculosis interventions in the penitentiary system institutions	786 460	411 654	52%
Component 4: Better supervision of outpatient treatment and social support provided to vulnerable groups	833 636	891 551	107%
Component 5: Developing the human resources and institutional potential of the country for the efficient implementation of antituberculosis interventions in the Republic of Belarus	335 382	433 797	129%
TOTAL	3 913 095	3 890 429	99%

FINANCIAL DELIVERY FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2008 – 31 DECEMBER 2009, USD

Cost categories	Budget	Actual expenses*	Balance	Delivery, per cent
HR	438 631	434 406	4 225	99%
Technical assistance	29 764	51 858	-22 094	174%
Training	349 485	421 083	-71 598	120%
Healthcare goods and medical equipment	1 070 207	1 429 728	-359 521	134%
Drugs and pharmaceuticals	946 715	440 454	506 261	47%
Costs associated with Procurement and Supplies Management	111 471	61 402	50 069	55%
Infrastructure and other equipment	23 230	208 235	-185 005	896%
Information materials	46 388	46 035	353	99%
Monitoring and evaluation	46 944	57 318	-10 374	122%
Life support of the clients/ population target groups	454 262	421 140	33 122	93%
Planning and administration	75 802	69 811	5 991	92%
Overheads	320 196	248 959	71 237	78%
TOTAL	3 913 095	3 890 429	22 666	99%

*Financial data on Grant expenses is provisional. Final data will be available after the end of UNDP fiscal year.

1. Support to antituberculosis activities in the system of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus

1.1 Training and refresher training of healthcare workers

- On 26-30 January 2009 at the Educational Centre of the SI NSRCP an International Workshop "Treatment and Observation of MDR TB Patients" for TB doctors was held involving experts from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Management of MDR TB (Riga, Latvia). 27 TB doctors were trained.
- On 11-12 August 2009 in Gomel and 13-14 August 2009 in Minsk two workshops were held on the issues of drug management of anti-TB drugs involving participation of Mr. John Holly, an international expert. 65 people were trained.
- On 12-15 October 2009 a National Educational Workshop on Infection Control was held at the SI NSRCP involving experts from CDC (Harvard, USA), Vladimir TB dispensary (Russia) and the international organization "Partners in Health". 46 specialists were trained.
- During 2009 15 educational workshops were held for 310 TB doctors, 66 medical nurses of TB institutions, 306 physicians and 34 paramedical healthcare (PHC) workers. In total 716 specialists were trained.
- On 24-25 September 2009 an International Research and Practice Conference "First Results of the Activity of the TB service of the Republic on Implementing the "Stop TB" Strategy"" was held. 170 specialists attended the event.

"Infection control is a most important and indispensable part of the activities of an antituberculosis institution. Unfortunately, the number of healthcare workers infected with tuberculosis has been increasing recently. 103 persons were taken ill in 2008. The main topics of reports concerned infection control (IC) based on the peculiarities of the profile of a certain institution, availability of material resources, geographical location and construction of the buildings of healthcare institutions, which provide antituberculosis care to the population.

Special attention was given to the hierarchy of IC interventions, the algorithm for the preparation of the terms of reference and project design documentation for the implementation of IC engineering measures, as well as to the generation of political commitment of high management, and engaging financial and human resources to address the issue of TB infection".

V. Kralko,

Deputy Director Clinical Work
of the National Scientific and Research
Centre for Pulmonology and Phthisiology

GRANT'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Belarusian and foreign TB doctors made first conclusions about the implementation of the Global Stop-TB Strategy

On 24-25 September 2009 an International Research and Practical Conference «First Results of the Implementation of the Stop-TB Strategy» took place at Grodno Medical University. Stop-TB is a universally accepted world-wide strategy against tuberculosis recommended by the World Health Organisation. That is why besides representatives from all oblasts of Belarus representatives of the Central Research Institute of Tuberculosis of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, Research Institute of Tuberculosis of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation in Moscow and St.Petersburg, Ukrainian specialists from Kiev, Lviv, Dnepropetrovsk, Ternopol and specialists from Poland participated in the conference. Activities to organize directly observed therapy of TB patients at in-patient and out-patient institutions were presented at the conference along with presentations on topical problems of phthisiology: treatment of drug-resistant tuberculosis in Belarus, organisation of interventions to address HIV-related tuberculosis and issues of tuberculosis diagnosis and prevention. A collection of conference materials was published, which included 74 works of the specialists from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, and Poland on the urgent issues of modern phthisiology. Two representatives of DEP MoI took part in the Annual European Respiratory Society's Congress (Vienna, Austria, 12-16 September 2009).



2 640 copies of TB related educational materials recommended by the WHO were published and distributed to the TB institutions in the country and within the primary clinical network:

"Guidelines for Programmatic Management of Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis",

"Prevention of Tuberculosis in Treatment and Prevention Institutions in the Context of Shortage of Necessary Resources"

"TB-HIV. Clinical Guidelines",

**"Laboratory Service in Antituberculosis Programmes".
Part 1, 2, 3,**

"Concise Guidelines on Tuberculosis for PHC Workers".

1. 2 Modernization of Laboratory Service

- On 16-17 March 2009 an international workshop for the laboratory specialists of TB institutions was held at the educational centre attended by Girts Skenders, acting WHO expert, Head of the Supranational Reference Laboratory (Riga). 50 laboratory specialists were trained.
- On 19-21 October 2009 an international workshop was conducted for laboratory specialists of TB institutions attended by Girts Skenders, acting WHO expert, Head of the Supranational Reference Laboratory (Riga) and Sven Hoffner, Head of the Supranational Reference Laboratory of the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control (Stockholm). 39 specialists were trained.
- Tenders were held and contracts were concluded for the delivery of ultraviolet bactericidal lamps, 3M medical respirators, consumables for BACTEC, and computer hardware for bacteriological laboratories.

GRANT'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

"The National Reference Laboratory on bacteriological diagnostics of tuberculosis at the SI NSRCPP was organized and has been operating since the second half of 2007. There are 40 bacteriological laboratories conducting TB bacteriological tests in the country. The procedure for the organisation of the operation of laboratories, which perform bacteriological TB diagnosis in the state healthcare institutions, was adopted by the Enactment of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus. The main objective of the restructuring is the centralization of the regional bacteriological laboratories, reduction of inoculation stations operating with insufficient load and low efficiency, and setting up microscopy centres. The tree level system of bacteriological laboratories for diagnosing tuberculosis led by the National Reference Laboratory is being implemented. Standard hours for performing bacteriological TB tests were adopted by Enactment No. 66 of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus dated 15 June 2009.

In 2009 within the framework of the TB Grant medical equipment was delivered to the bacteriological laboratories of levels II-III (anti-aerosol centrifuges, autoclaves, drier and sterilizer cabinets, binocular microscopes), consumables for the automated BACTEC MGIT 960 system, GenoType® diagnostic kits for molecular genetic identification of mycobacteria, reactants for microscopic TB test and laboratory furniture. Delivery of chemically clean substances was launched for the mycobacteria drug susceptibility test. Utilization of the obtained medical equipment, diagnostics kits and high quality reagents improved the quality of TB laboratory tests, biological safety in laboratories, made it possible to implement new test methods and improved motivation of personnel."



E. Sagalchik,
Head of the National Reference Laboratory

Within the implementation of the Grant the following laboratory equipment was purchased and supplied to the TB institutions in the country:

- **Deep Freezer – 1 pc.;**
- **Bio-safety cabinet class II – 20 pcs.;**
- **Thermostat – 26 pcs.;**
- **Autoclave – 26 pcs.;**
- **Drying and sterilizing cabinet – 25 pcs.;**
- **Egg culture coagulator – 25 pcs.;**
- **Binocular microscope – 84 pcs.;**
- **Box for the transportation of biomaterial – 680 pcs.;**
- **Container for sputum collection – 385 000 pcs.;**
- **Laboratory furniture set – 40 pcs.;**
- **Consumables (for BACTEC express detection of tuberculosis, for bacteriological microscopy (dyes, immersion oil), clean substances for DST).**

Total cost of the purchased equipment was over USD 1 400 000.

1.3 Treatment of TB Patients

The second batch of first line anti-TB drugs was supplied for treatment of 3 730 tuberculosis patients of category 1-3. Currently 3 467 patients are being treated with first line anti-TB drugs, which were purchased within the Grant's framework.

Two doses of second-line anti-TB drugs were distributed for the treatment of multidrug resistant patients. 100 MDR TB patients (50 patients at SI NSRCP and 50 patients at Molodechno tuberculosis dispensary) are receiving treatment.

On 17-21 August 2009 a visit of two experts from the WHO Green Light Committee was organized dedicated to the treatment of MDR TB patients with second-line drugs.

The application to the WHO Green Light Committee for second-line antituberculosis drugs for treatment of 200 MDR TB patients was approved.

At the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus a Work Group composed of the specialists of the phthiology and sanitary and epidemiological services was organized and approved, whose function was to develop infection control plans for the TB institutions of the country. Consequently, infection control plans for four TB institutions in the country were developed:

- **Healthcare Institution (HI) Minsk City TB Dispensary No. 1,**
 - **HI Minsk City TB Dispensary No. 2,**
 - **HI Gomel Oblast TB Clinical Hospital,**
 - **HI Molodechno TB Dispensary;**
- as well as:
- **Guidelines for the development of infection control plans for TB institutions in the country. The Guidelines were sent to an international expert for review;**
 - **Infection control training programmes for the healthcare workers of TB service and specialists of the sanitary and epidemiological service;**
 - **Infection control checklists for the healthcare workers of TB service, specialists of the sanitary and epidemiological service and personnel of the MoI.**

The following equipment was procured and delivered to TB institutions:

- 1 car;
- 10 negatoscopes;
- 17 medical carts and transportation carts;
- 9 560 medical respirators;
- 35 000 surgical masks;
- 7 Bitrex test kits for fit testing of respirators;
- 66 ultrasonic nebulizers for inducing sputum;
- Side effect drugs.

2. Improvement of the epidemiological surveillance and monitoring in the system of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus in order to fight the spread of tuberculosis in the Republic of Belarus

2.1 Implementation of the National "Tuberculosis" Register

«Starting from 1 January 2008 cohort analysis has been performed. According to the verified data for the third quarter of 2008, positive results in the cohort of newly detected patients with bacterioscopic and bacteriological detection of mycobacteria tuberculosis were registered: in the first quarter – for 73.7% patients, in the third quarter – for 74.9%. Respectively, 48.6% and 54.1% patients were successfully treated in the cohort.»

G. Gurevich,

Director of the National Scientific Research Centre for Pulmonology and Phthisiology пульмонологии и фтизиатрии

The Work Group developed and approved at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus the concept for the establishment of the National "Tuberculosis" Register – an automated information system for data collection and analysis.

Computer equipment was purchased and transferred to the TB institutions to implement Grant activities and personnel training:

- Personal computer – 17 pcs.,
- Notebook – 3 pcs.,
- Multimedia projector – 11 pcs.

Repairs of the room allocated for the register at the SI NSRCPP were performed. The status of the National "Tuberculosis" Register has been determined; persons responsible for the implementation and management of the Register on the part of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus and TB institutions of the republic have been nominated. (Information letter of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus dated 29.04.2009 No. 02-3-05/732-237). An international tender for the development of the Register in line with the approved concept has been held, evaluation of tender offers involving an international expert in computer programming and information technologies has been held, and a developer has been identified.

Recording and reporting TB forms in line with WHO requirements and a unified approach to the registration of TB patients have been integrated in all TB institutions.

To this end registration journals for TB patients were elaborated upon, printed and transferred to TB institutions.

- f.081-1/u – 500 pcs.;
- Registration of MDR TB patients – 150 pcs. Guidelines for filling up No. 081-1/u registration form «TB Patients' Register» have been developed. Registration of MDR TB cases is assigned to a separate register.

In order to implement the National "Tuberculosis" Register it was necessary to provide Internet connection. Starting from 1 August 2009 access to the Internet in all oblast TB institutions and in Minsk City has been provided. This solved the problems of interaction between antituberculosis organisations on the implementation of the Register.

In conjunction with the specialists of SI NSRCP Guidelines for the cohort analysis and the assessment of the efficiency of treatment of TB patients were developed and adopted on 16 August 2009 at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus. 500 copies were printed at the printing house.

On 16-18 September 2009 a national workshop "Registration and Monitoring of Tuberculosis" was conducted involving the Head of the Estonian Tuberculosis Register, a Coordinator of the Estonian National Tuberculosis Programme, a member of the Estonian National Work Group for TB/HIV; as a result 31 specialists were trained.

Within the framework of the Grant 11 workshops on the registration of TB cases and conducting cohort analysis were held during 2009. 172 healthcare workers were trained.

GRANT'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Jointly with Sven Hoffner, Head of the Supranational Reference Laboratory, and WHO expert on monitoring and evaluation **a programme was developed for conducting a drug susceptibility survey in MDR TB control** in the country. The study has been going on since 1.11.2009 at the TB dispensaries of Minsk City.

An order of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus was issued dated 22.12.2009 No. 1189 on Implementation of the National "Tuberculosis" Register, which sets the regulations for keeping the "Tuberculosis" Register starting from 1.01.2010 in all oblast (city) antituberculosis healthcare institutions.

The Work Group developed and approved at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus the concept for the establishment of the National "Tuberculosis" Register – an automated information system for data collection and analysis.

"In 2009 activities aimed to improve the TB epidemiological surveillance system in the Republic of Belarus were conducted. To this end the concept of the National "Tuberculosis" Register was elaborated, a tender for the development of register software was held, the winner announced, the register software was developed, and training courses on data input for the specialists of antituberculosis organizations of all regions were conducted with the involvement of the TB Grant. Since January 2010 by the Internal Order of the Ministry of Health, the National "Tuberculosis" Register has been introduced formally nationwide. Introduction of the register makes it possible to computerize processing of statistical tuberculosis related information based on the input data, facilitate acquisition of information for statistical reporting and consolidation of data at the oblast and national level. In 2010 it is planned to connect a laboratory module, which will ensure quick and timely input of information from the laboratory network into the Register on the bacterioexcretion in patients and the results of drug susceptibility tests. All this makes it possible to raise the TB epidemical surveillance system in the Republic of Belarus to the modern international information level.»

A.Astrovko,
*Head of the Department of Epidemiology,
Prevention and Organisation
of Phthiology Assistance
of the National Scientific Research Centre
of Pulmonology and Phthiology*

3. Support to antituberculosis interventions in the penitentiary system institutions of the Republic of Belarus

3.1 Training and refresher training of healthcare workers

- On 26-30 January 2009 five doctors TB doctors from the National Tuberculosis Hospital of Penal Colony-12 completed the training course «Treatment and Management of MDR TB Patients» involving WHO experts.
- On 27 January, 18 March and June 18 2009 training workshops were conducted for the PHC doctors and medical nurses of the system of executing criminal penalties on the DOTS strategy, infection control and observing TB therapy; 154 specialists were trained.
- On 19 March and 19 June 2009 working meetings of healthcare workers of the system of executing criminal penalties on the issues of implementing DOTS strategy in the penitentiary institutions of the country were held, which were attended by 96 specialists.
- On 20 March 2009 in Penal Colony-12, and on 24 March 2009 in PC-4 (women's colony) campaigns were held among healthcare workers of the hospital and the TB patients dedicated to the World Tuberculosis Day. 930 convicts suffering with TB were provided with hygiene kits.
- On 16-17 March 2009 four laboratory assistants participated in the training course involving WHO experts for the personnel of the laboratory service of the TB institutions in the country.
- On 23-24 July and 3-4 December 2009 educational workshops on laboratory diagnosis of tuberculosis were conducted. 21 laboratory technicians of the SECP were trained.
- On 21 September - 02 October 2009 2 TB doctors of the SECP completed the course "Treatment of MDR Tuberculosis" in Riga (Latvia).
- On 12-16 September 2009 two healthcare representatives of the DEP MoI participated in the Annual ERS Congress, Vienna (Austria).
- On 29-31 October 2009 four staff members of penitentiary system took part in the Prison Health Protection International Conference, Madrid (Spain).
- On 12-15 October 2009 four SECP doctors took part in an educational workshop on infection control involving international experts.
- On 19-22 October 2009 two laboratory SECP doctors took part in a workshop for the experts of bacteriological laboratories of the TB service of the nation involving international experts.
- On 24-30 November 2009 one specialist completed training at the international TB course for nurses, in Tartu and Tallinn (Estonia).
- On 2 December 2009 an educational workshop on infection control and MDR treatment was conducted for the workers of the anti-TB service of the SECP. 44 members of personnel were trained.
- On 8 December 2009 an educational workshop on TB issues was conducted for the personnel of the Temporary Detention Facility of the Gomel Department of Internal Affairs. 44 specialists were trained.

GRANT'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



On 9-10 September 2009 the **4th International Scientific and Practical Conference "Topical Issues of Penitentiary Medicine: Tuberculosis and Other Socially Relevant Diseases in Prisons"** took place in Minsk at the National Library of Belarus. Representatives from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, specialists from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Belarus, specialists from the MoI departments and representatives from international and public organisations attended.. Topics such as the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis and other socially relevant diseases were discussed at the conference, as well as the issue of organizing infection control in national correctional facilities. The discussions were focused on the international experience of addressing the multidrug-resistant tuberculosis issue, interaction of the penitentiary and civil tuberculosis service as well as HIV infection in the national correctional facilities of the European Region.



"This conference became a very important event for the healthcare workers of the penitentiary system. It allowed them to familiarise themselves with the newest approaches to TB prevention, treatment and diagnosis, and study the international experience on early diagnosis, treatment and prevention of TB. The opportunity for mutually beneficial networking between healthcare services of the CIS countries and the countries of the European Region emerged".



A. Kralko

Chief Specialist of the Department of Organisation of Healthcare Provision of Special Squads of Department of Execution of Penalties of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Belarus, conference participant

GRANT'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Formal opening of the Information and Educational Centre financed by the TB Grant took place on 9 April 2009 at the National Tuberculosis Hospital of PC-12. The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the UN and the UNDP in Belarus, MoI DEP, PC-12 prison hospital. UN Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus Mr. Antonius Broek in his greeting speech remarked on the importance of the event and emphasized that the opening of the educational centre "is a great contribution to the fight against tuberculosis not only in the Republic of Belarus, but also in the whole world". Mr. Broek also expressed hope that the future cooperation would be successful and fruitful. The opening of the centre makes it possible to conduct trainings for the healthcare workers of the system of the criminal correction. In order to improve the diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis in convicts, the healthcare workers of penitentiary institutions – doctors, medical nurses and laboratory assistants - will undergo training at the centre. The work of the centre will promote better quality of antituberculosis treatment for inmates of penitentiary institutions. A TB Information and Training Centre was additionally equipped with a negatoscope, a copier, a fax machine, and consumable stationery.



GRANT'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

A film "Thinking About the Future" (including an audio version) on the prevention of tuberculosis in prisons, was made. 40 copies of the film were transferred to penitentiary institutions for use in preventive work.

WHO information and educational materials reprinted within the Grant were transferred to the SECP healthcare facilities:

- A poster on the harmful effect of smoking – 100 copies;
- "Clinical Guidelines to the Treatment of Tuberculosis" – 50 copies;
- "Concise Guidelines on Tuberculosis for PHC Workers" – 100 copies;
- "Recommendations for the Programmatic Management of Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis" – 35 copies;
- "Prevention of Tuberculosis in Therapy and Prevention Facilities in the Context of Shortage of Required Resources" – 35 copies;
- "TB-HIV. Clinical Guidelines" – 25 copies;
- "Laboratory Service in Antituberculosis Programmes". Parts 1, 2, 3 – 25 copies.

3.2. Modernization of the service of bacteriological diagnostics

For the laboratory of REPUBLICAN TB HOSPITAL PC-12 and other SECP institutions the following equipment was purchased and transferred to the institutions:

- 4 binocular microscopes;
- 2 biosafety cabinets class II;
- 720 respirators;
- 7 000 pasteur pipettes;
- 7 boxes for the transportation of biomaterial;
- 13 negatoscopes;
- 3 autoclaves;
- 4 refrigerators;
- 22 nebulizers;
- laboratory furniture set;
- 40 000 slide plates;
- reagents for the BACTEC bacteriological diagnostics system;
- consumables for bacterioscopy (immersion oil, 64 l., dyes for bacterioscopy, chemically clean substances of antituberculosis drugs).

For the treatment of MDR TB patients second-line antituberculosis drugs were handed over to Republican TB Hospital PC-12 and 100 MDR TB patients benefitted.

For the treatment of TB patients first-line drugs were handed over to Republican TB Hospital PC-12 and 260 TB patients of category 1-3 benefitted

The respirators, floor scales, drugs for treating adverse effects in the MDR tuberculosis patients (euthyrox, carbamazepin, dexametazon, amitryptiline, fluconazole, loratadine, metoclopramid, pyridoxine hydrochloride, fluoxetine), which were procured within the framework of the Grant, were delivered to the penitentiary institutions.

"In 2009 within the framework of the TB Grant treatment in the National Tuberculosis Hospital of PC-12 of the Department of the Execution of Penalties of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Belarus for the Vitebsk Oblast was performed with the drugs procured within the Green Light programme. According to the evidence gathered by experts therapy with these drugs showed good results, and there were also positive responses from the patients themselves".

A. Grinevich,

Head of Republican TB Hospital PC-12

"I have suffered with pulmonary tuberculosis since 2002. A lot of times I have been treated out of prison and in prison hospital in Orsha. While tuberculosis was in its first stage my attitude to the disease was not serious, that is why I was often discharged from the hospital as an offender, before my treatment was completed. As a result the tuberculosis became worse. When I felt that I had lost a significant amount of weight, experienced breathlessness and

developed a frequent cough I went to the doctor myself. They examined me and said that my «rods» were resistant to many TB drugs, and it was difficult to cure me. The treatment was very hard, as due to the large number of drugs I frequently had nausea. I was often vomiting and had stomach ache. Periodically I had allergic rash. When Green Light drugs were administered, there were less adverse effects, and these disappeared with time. I quickly put on weight, I felt better, and the anorexic symptoms dissipated. There were no more «rods», the cavity closed. Today I am continuing to take these drugs on dispensary treatment, and I hope to be cured. At home my wife and child are waiting for me and I do not want them to contract tuberculosis from me».

I., 41 years

"I was sent to prison at an old age. I never thought I would end up here. I have a lot of diseases: hypertension III degree, in 2003 I suffered a heart attack, and moreover I have diabetes due to which my feet hurt, and I have troubles with my eyes. I have disability status II because of these illnesses. But I never had tuberculosis. Recently when I was undergoing an examination at the therapeutical department of the prison hospital in Minsk they detected tuberculosis on top of this. In the Orsha hospital they told me that I have tuberculosis «rods», and they are resistant to drugs from the very beginning. Doctors said that taking into account my age and my other diseases it will be difficult to cure me from tuberculosis. They administered Green Light drugs. As a result of inpatient treatment my «rods» disappeared, and X-ray examination showed the infiltration to be resolving. Doctors say that I am recovering and will soon move to the healthy zone of the hospital".

M., 64 years

4. Better supervision of outpatient tuberculosis treatment and social support to vulnerable groups

4.1. Organisation of observed outpatient treatment of TB patients at antituberculosis dispensaries.

In order to improve access of TB patients in the country to the possibility of social support within the Grant activities and an improved outpatient treatment, 7 TB institutions of Belarus were additionally included into the programme of social support. Altogether the system of observed outpatient treatment with social support to the vulnerable groups of TB patients was established in 20 TB institutions in the country. 3 411 TB patients undergoing observed outpatient treatment received social support in the form of grocery sets and travel passes.

"I caught a cold ill in spring 2009. Following a chest X-Ray in the outpatient clinic tuberculosis was detected. At first I could not believe that this could happen to me, as I had always known that this is the disease of alcoholics, the unemployed and the homeless. I began therapy in the hospital. I had to travel every day, and it took over an hour one way. I didn't only spend my time; I also had to buy a travel pass for three types of transport to get there. I was enlisted on the social support programme; initially I did not quite understand it and refused, then I spoke to other patients and it turned out that this was just what I needed: a travel pass and grocery sets - twice a month. In general, this is a very good support to such patients as us".

D., 29 years

Implementation of the social support programme allows to ensure the adherence to treatment on the part of socially vulnerable patients and those especially in need. The patients in the outpatient treatment phase, as a rule, stay under treatment for 4-6 months, and this is quite a long term for the intake of drugs. After the first months of treatment and the improvement of the state of health the patients are less and less motivated to take drugs every day, especially if there is a long way to go or if they have a difficult schedule. Currently 75% of TB patients undergoing outpatient treatment receive social support. Besides, thanks to the car, which was procured within the Grant, home delivery of drugs to TB patients (25-30 patients) has been arranged at the dispensary, these are the people with a bad co-morbidity who cannot go to the dispensary every day. Considering that treatment of tuberculosis is lengthy the great role in achieving maximum efficiency of treatment is forming the system of incentives and social support.

E. Molodykh

Head of the Phthisiology Department of Minsk City Tuberculosis Dispensary No. 2

4.2. Information and Educational Work with the Population

On 14 June 2009 a toll free hotline **8 801 100 13 13** on TB issues was open on the basis of SI NSRCP. Information support was provided for the hotline over TV and radio, as well as in printed materials.

NSRCP information web site was created – **www.rnpcpf.by**. The web site provides information on the work of TB service in Belarus, work of international organizations providing financial and other TB related issues.



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On 24 March 2009 within the TB Grant held a national information and prevention campaign, White Camomile, dedicated to World Tuberculosis Day. On thy World TB Day students, school children, noble ladies sold handmade camomiles by children from orphanages to buy drugs, and clothes for TB patients with this money.



The white flower of camomile was chosen as a symbol of the fight against tuberculosis in 1911. The All-Russian League to Fight Tuberculosis inaugurated a White Camomile Day. On the day of donations to the Fund against Tuberculosis students, and "noble ladies" sold white artificial camomiles made by the orphans. People had a paper or a metal flower pinned to their clothes.

About 5 500 spectators in 11 towns and cities of Belarus watched free of charge a social information and prevention film on tuberculosis "A Trip" (Holland) and a feature film "Moulin Rouge" (USA, Australia, directed by Baz Luhrmann).

"A Trip" is a film about the destiny of one family. Lack of permanent employment, disorders at home and troubled family lives contributed to the aggravation of the disease – an open form of tuberculosis. The six-year-old daughter contracts the infection from her father and dies: subsequently the family falls apart.



The lead female character of "Moulin Rouge" is slowly dying of tuberculosis, but she continues to sing, dance and love. The disease does not stop her from becoming the big star of a faerie show.

On the day of the movie showing mobile "Pulmoexpress" photofluorographic units were placed next to the cinema theatres in Minsk, Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Soligorsk, Svetlogorsk, Zhlobin, Rechitsa, Mozyr, Pinsk.

Over 1 000 citizens of Belarus had their chests X-rayed, were consulted by a TB doctor, and received materials on tuberculosis distributed by the volunteers of the Belarusian Red Cross, and a symbol of the action – a white camomile.



On 24 March 2009 Belarusian citizens, mass media, healthcare, educational, culture institutions, and public organizations united their efforts in the fight against tuberculosis. The proactiveness of the public gives hope that the slogan of the information and prevention campaign "I Can Stop Tuberculosis" will materialize.

Mass Media against Tuberculosis

On 11 February 2009 the workshop "Mass Media against Tuberculosis" was held in Minsk. The workshop was attended by 25 representatives of the national and regional mass media (printed issues, TV and radio companies, information agencies, Internet publications). The journalists actively discussed myths and stereotypes within society and the peculiarities of presenting materials on tuberculosis in mass media considering the age and social differences of the target groups. They shared their experience on the creation of thematic materials, and together found the answers to the question "How can one bring the attention of the public to the problem of tuberculosis?" The work in the creative groups was very interesting and lively; the participants prepared interviews on tuberculosis, planned possible joint information and preventive programmes and projects.

On 29 April 2009 in the Crown Plaza Hotel an Awards Ceremony took place for the winners of the "Mass Media against Tuberculosis" competition. This event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus, United Nations Development Programme in Belarus and the Belarusian Red Cross Society. The competition for the best coverage of tuberculosis related issues in the national mass media was conducted by the Belarusian Red Cross Society within the information

campaign "I Can Stop Tuberculosis" from 1 February to 31 March 2009. Printed issues, TV and radio companies, information agencies, Internet publications, which had published and put on air materials on tuberculosis, had an opportunity to participate in the competition. Representatives of Belarusian mass media responded actively to the call to take part in the competition. The competition committee reviewed and defined the best works out of 63 entries submitted by 24 different mass media. The winners of the competition were awarded with prizes and certificates. The first prizes was awarded to Anna Komarova (film "The Future Without Tuberculosis", Channel 8), Artur Pyrko (a series of radio programmes "Kalinkovichi News"), Elena Prus (BelTA Information Agency). UN Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus Mr. Antonius Broek remarked on the importance of holding the first national competition "Mass Media against Tuberculosis", the significance of mass media working on drawing the attention of the public to the problem of fighting tuberculosis, and expressed hope that such competitions would become more prevalent.

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Life is Sweet without Tobacco!

On 31 May 2009, the World No Tobacco Day within the framework of the awareness raising campaign "I Can Stop Tuberculosis" in 42 cities and towns of Belarus held an action aiming to draw the attention of the public to the problem of smoking tobacco.



There were a lot of people in the parks, squares, in the vicinity of cinemas of oblast and district centres of the country. The attention of the passers-by was drawn by the volunteers of the Belarusian Red Cross Society, who suggested smokers to give up a cigarette and exchange it for a "Camomile" sweet. Altogether 800 volunteers were involved in the action, who informed the people on the consequences of smoking and the risk of tuberculosis developing in smokers, and they also handed out flyers with recommendations on how to quit smoking. Most smokers willingly parted with a cigarette, while many declared their wish to quit tobacco, and voiced concerns as regards their health. Some people shared their experience of trying to quit smoking. The volunteers proposed to conduct a photofluorographic examination on all those who wanted it. On this day in the squares of 16 cities and towns mobile medical "Pulmoexpress" units were installed. The slogan of the action "Life Is Sweet without Tobacco" allowed smokers to see that there was a more attractive alternative to smoking, and one can enjoy just life, a hobby, and - the main thing - clean air.



On 24 March 2009 at the Church of St. Peter and Alena in Minsk along with the Belarusian Red Cross Society a Charity action for the homeless people was conducted where the volunteers of the BRC educated the participants about tuberculosis, and 57 people received grocery sets and clothes.

On 28 February – 1 March 2009 a workshop was held for the volunteers of the BRC volunteer movement on "Conducting Actions to Prevent Tuberculosis», 23 volunteers were trained.

On 28 July 2009 training sessions on tuberculosis were held for volunteers of the Belarusian Red Cross.



In the period from 29 September to 2 October 2009 within the framework of the Medicine-2009 Show at the BelExpo National Exhibition Centre a stand with materials on tuberculosis prevention was presented. 178 institutions received 10 400 copies of preventive materials.

On 25-26 December 2009 "The Right to Health" campaign was conducted in Brest, Pinsk, and Kobrin for the homeless people, the action involved officers of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Belarus.

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The following materials were printed in the framework of the campaign (226 600 copies):

- A-6 format leaflet "Life is Sweet without Tobacco" - 85 000 copies;
- WHO posters "The Smokers's Body" - 1 000 copies;
- A-6 memo "I Can Stop Tuberculosis" - 10 000 copies;
- A-4 format memo with information on the symptoms of tuberculosis on sticky paper - 10 600 copies;
- Cup coaster advertising the "Hot Line on Tuberculosis Issues" information line - 15 000 copies;
- MDR-Tuberculosis brochures - 15 000 copies;
- Presentation postcard "Camomile" - 10 000 copies;
- A-6 leaflets with information about tuberculosis - 20 000 copies;
- A-1 posters on the prevention of paediatric tuberculosis - 5 000 copies;
- Memos on infection control for the personnel of the departments of interior and healthcare workers - 30 000 copies;
- Luis Figo and the World Cup for the Victory Over Tuberculosis comics - 15 000 copies;
- Questions About Tuberculosis brochure for the population - 5 000 copies;
- Brochure for TB patients, 5 000 copies.



4.4. Training and refresher training of the personnel of antituberculosis dispensaries

On 12 June 2009 and 4 December 2009 working meetings were held for the regional coordinators and accountants on the outputs of work within the first 18 months of the Grant implementation, and on planning of the second phase of the Grant.

Two workshops "The Role of MoI Officers in Tuberculosis Control" for the local police inspectors of District Office of the MoI were conducted in Minsk and Gomel, 100 persons were trained in total. MoI officers belong to the risk group as regards tuberculosis. The participants received useful information on the global tuberculosis epidemic situation and in the Republic of Belarus, on the types of tuberculosis, ways of spreading, and symptoms. District Office of the Department of the MoI officers became acquainted with the rules of using individual protective gear – a respirator. Local police inspectors were very interested in the problem of organizing infection control and the issues of personal security of MoI officers when dealing with TB patients. The participants of the workshop actively discussed in an open dialogue the most urgent professional question – legal aspects of interdepartmental interaction of District Office of the Department of the MoI with DEP MoI and TB institutions. The Workshop helped local police inspectors not only to find ways of efficient interaction with healthcare institutions and DEP MoI, but also in acknowledging the responsibility for their health, and to remind them of their role in tuberculosis control.

5. Developing the human and institutional potential of the country for the efficient implementation of antituberculosis interventions in the Republic of Belarus

5.1. Grant Management and Coordination of Grant Activities

On 25 May 2009 Enactment of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus No. 57 "On Adopting the Guidelines for the Procedure of Organizing the Activity of the Laboratories, which Perform Tuberculosis Diagnosis in Public Healthcare Institutions" was adopted. On 24 January 2009 a working meeting of specialists of TB service of the national and regional levels was held involving representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Belarus on the outputs of the activity in 2008 and objectives for 2009 in order to share the results of the work and coordinate activity on Grant implementation.

On 23 April 2009 a working meeting of the leaders of the national TB service was held on the results of the work of the TB service in the first quarter of 2009, on the preparation of the application for the second phase of the Grant and on the restructuring of the laboratory network of the national TB service.

5.2. Training representatives of state and public organisations involved in prevention and treatment of tuberculosis at the international and regional level in order to effectively implement antituberculosis interventions in the Republic of Belarus.

In 2009 53 specialists took part in the thematic conferences and workshops dedicated to such topics of particular interest for Belarus such as "Modern Methods in the Diagnostics of Tuberculosis", "Planning and Organizing Infection Control", "Treatment and Observation of MDR TB Patients", "Principles and Outcomes of the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Global Fund and National Programs to Prevent Spread of Tuberculosis", etc. in Russia, Austria, Great Britain, Latvia, Georgia, Italy, Estonia, Switzerland, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey.

"The Annual Congress of the European Respiratory Society, which took place on 12-16 September 2009 in Vienna, was a unique opportunity for an English speaking specialist (a TB doctor or a pulmonologist) to get verifiable scientific and practical information on the most topical issues of respiratory medicine, including tuberculosis. Participation in the congress presented the opportunity to use materials (e-reports, posters, abstracts) through European Respiratory Society web site.

Urgent tuberculosis related issues were quite broadly covered at the numerous

symposiums of the Congress. Consultations with the leading specialists on the topics of their reports related to the use of BCG, chemoprophylaxis of TB, DR TB, TB/HIV, tuberculosis infection control allowed the specialists to significantly increase their knowledge and establish long-term contacts. Many reports were devoted to the WHO PAL Strategy as a systematic, standard and clear approach for the correct detection of TB cases among many respiratory patients. The collected material and up-to-date information serve as a basis for developing methodological recommendations, lectures, and educational trainings on topical issues of phthisiology and pulmonology.

The MDR-Tuberculosis cycle of the WHO Educational Centre in Riga serves as an excellent combination of theory and practice, of exigency and amiability. Similar patient profiles and the common phthisiology school of the past make this course most appropriate for the conditions of Belarus. Openness of the personnel of the Centre and specialists of the practical TB service can rectify even the most sceptical TB doctor in regard to modern strategies. Study of this course is equally useful for a simple TB doctor and a manager.

D. Ruzanov,

Head of the Phthisiology and Pulmonology Chair of the Gomel State Medical University

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On 26 January 2009 at the SI NSRCPP of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus the opening ceremony of the Centre for the Training of Healthcare Personnel took place involving UN Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus, Mr. A. Broek. The opening of the Centre became the first stage of the National Information and Prevention Campaign "White camomile" dedicated to the World Tuberculosis Day on 24 March. This Centre was opened with the purpose of enhancing the human resources and the institutional potential of the national TB Service and primary healthcare network through the increase of knowledge and professional qualification of specialists in the sphere of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis. Furniture and necessary equipment were procured for the Centre, the equipment was connected to the Internet and curricula were developed for the training of specialists in line with WHO recommendations. Doctors and medical nurses, laboratory assistants from TB institutions and the general clinical network will be able to participate in trainings on modern methods of prevention, detection and treatment of tuberculosis in line with the DOTS strategy and the Global Stop-TB Strategy. It is planned to invite international experts for the training of national specialists in the field of phthisiology.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BRC	Belarusian Red Cross Society
DEP MoI	Department of the Execution of Penalties of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Belarus
DOTS	WHO direct observation therapy strategy
GF	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
MDR	Multidrug Resistance
Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus	Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus
MoI	Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Belarus
NSRCPP	National Scientific Research Centre for Pulmonology and Phthiology
PLHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
RB	Republic of Belarus
SECP	System of executing criminal penalties
SI	State institution
TB Grant	Grant of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the Republic of Belarus "Strengthening Support to the Vulnerable Groups and the Population at Large under the National TB Control Strategy of Belarus"
TBD	Tuberculosis Dispensary
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Grant of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis
and Malaria in the Republic of Belarus

**«Strengthening Support to the Vulnerable Groups
and the Population at Large under
the National TB Control Strategy of Belarus»**

implemented by the United Nations
Development Programme in cooperation with
the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus

Grants Manager UNDP/GFATM Grants Implementation Unit
Marina Dotsenko

E-mail: globalfundproject@un.minsk.by
Tel/fax: +375 17 299 51 88

Adress:
7a Kozlov Lane, 4th floor
Minsk 220037, Republic of Belarus

For information on Grants activities visit
www.rnpcpf.by, www.hiv-aids.by

