Progress update on Task Force work, 15 September 2008

This progress update provides a summary of Task Force work during 2008. The update includes:

- progress in implementing the recommendations that were specifically made to WHO during the December 2007 meeting of the Task Force; and
- progress in the three major strategic areas of work defined during the December 2007 meeting of the Task Force i.e. strengthening routine surveillance; prevalence surveys; and the methods used to produce epidemiological estimates.

1. Recommendations to WHO

a) Concept note. A "concept note" designed to explain the work of the Task Force, in particular for the purposes of resource mobilization, was written. The concept note explains why impact measurement is important, when and why the Task Force was established, the three major strategic pathways to be followed to implement the Task Force's mandate, organization of Task Force work, the budget for 2008–2010, and how findings and recommendations will be communicated and their expected impact. The concept note was drafted by Ana Bierrenbach, Katherine Floyd, Ikushi Onozaki and Jaap Broekmans. The final version was produced following input from various members of the Task Force after it was circulated in May, as well as from Mario Raviglione and Diana Weil. The concept note has been used for discussions linked to resource mobilization with various donors.

b) Policy paper. A Policy Paper called "Measuring progress in global TB control: WHO policy and recommendations" was prepared based on the Lancet paper published by members of the Task Force in January 2008 (distributed at the December 2007 meeting), the recommendations of the December 2007 meeting, the concept note, the comments from WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on TB (STAG-TB) during its meeting in June 2008, existing workshop material and further development of ideas related to the measurement of TB incidence by the WHO secretariat from mid-2008 onwards. This is the most important background document for the Task Force's September 2008 meeting, as one of the main objectives of the meeting is to review the Policy Paper. The main text is 36 pages. The policy paper was written by Ana Bierrenbach and Katherine Floyd, and the current draft has benefitted from input from Brian Williams, Ikushi Onozaki, Jaap Broekmans and Philippe Glaziou. A six-page accompanying document to explain the main queries/comments from WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on TB (STAG-TB) in June 2008, and the secretariat's response to them, has also been written.

c) Secretariat in WHO-HQ. Ana Bierrenbach is working full-time as secretariat of the Task Force and in particular on the area of work "routine surveillance". Ikushi Onozaki is spending 50% of his time on coordination of the area of work "prevalence surveys". Brian Williams (until August 2008) and Philippe Glaziou (from August 2008) are coordinating the work on methods for producing estimates with Marieke van der Werf (KNCV). Philippe Glaziou joined TME as senior epidemiologist in late July, and will be spending a large amount of his time on Task Force-related work.

2. Progress to date in the three strategic areas of work

a) Strengthening routine surveillance.

- Workshop in Costa Rica: WHO-HQ and PAHO/AMRO organized a five-day workshop (14-18 July) in Costa Rica. The workshop was attended by the 15 regional priority countries. The theme of the workshop was "Analysing progress towards the 2015 targets for TB control in Latin America: the role of routine surveillance data".
During the workshop, participants were introduced to the concept of "certification" of TB surveillance data and its relevance to Latin American countries, and gained practical experience of a set of standard methods that can be used to assess the fraction of cases and deaths being recorded in routine TB surveillance data. Participants made a first estimation of the fraction of cases that are missing from TB notification data, and used this to define a country-specific plan of what needs to be done to measure incidence using surveillance data between 2008 and 2015. The agenda, the workshop report and the supporting documents and exercises are available on request.

- **Development of a tool**: WHO-HQ has begun the development of a tool for systematic assessment of the reliability and completeness of TB notification data. The first version of this tool was used in the workshop in Costa Rica, and since then important improvements have been made (though it remains a work-in-progress). Following the September 2008 Task Force meeting, the tool will be further developed and field-tested during workshops (notably a workshop with European countries in Berlin in April 2009) and country missions.

- **Workshop in Cairo**: EMRO organized a five-day workshop (14-18 July) in Cairo, which received technical support from WHO-HQ. The workshop was attended by 5 countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen. These countries had recently implemented operational research studies with the aim of assessing the number of cases being diagnosed and treated by private providers but not notified. This assessment included use of capture-recapture methods. The main objective of the workshop was to help participants to perform record linkage and data analysis, and to write a preliminary draft report of the main study findings. The methods and the preliminary findings of this workshop will be discussed during the Task Force's September 2008 meeting. The agenda, the workshop report and the supporting documents are available on request. A summary of the study objectives, methods, results and interpretation is one of the background documents for the September Task Force meeting.

b) **Disease prevalence surveys**. Two one-week training workshops were held at WHO-HQ for ten of the 21 priority countries without recent experience of conducting a disease prevalence survey. The first one was held on 10-14 March 2008, and was attended by participants from Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda; the second one was held on 25-29 August 2008, and was attended by participants from Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Thailand, Zambia. The workshops were facilitated by staff from WHO, CDC, KNCV, the Union, RIT Japan and the Global Fund. A small meeting of the subgroup on prevalence surveys took place during the second workshop. Follow-up with the countries due to conduct prevalence surveys in the next 1-2 years is being done so that technical/financial partners can be mapped to each country. More detailed information about these workshops and the strategy to provide technical/financial assistance to these countries will be provided in a separate document, and will be discussed at the Task Force's September 2008 meeting.

c) **Methods for production of epidemiological estimates**. KNCV hosted a meeting to review current methods on 16-17 June in The Hague. The meeting was attended by several Task Force members as well as 3 experts from outside the Task Force. Feedback from this meeting and from the work which has been going on in this strategic area will be provided and discussed during the Task Force's September 2008 meeting.