Virtual Meeting of
WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB
30 March - 1 April 2021

Meeting Report
Background

The WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB (CSTF) was established in December 2018 as a platform for dialogue and exchange to harness the untapped potential in civil society engagement and accelerate progress to End TB. The Task Force aims to emphasize seven comprehensive key actions in efforts to end TB in SDG era, and the full terms of reference are accessible here. The CSTF currently comprises seventeen members, selected through an open call for expression of interest and evaluation by an independent Selection Panel. The seventeen members are: Amir Khan (Pakistan), Aneeta Pasha (Pakistan), Bertrand Kampoer (Cameroon), Blessina Kumar (India), Chamreun Sok Choub (Cambodia), Evaline Kibuchi (Kenya), Esty Febriani Mkes (Indonesia), Ezio Tavora dos Santos Filho (Brazil), Fatima Karmadwala (United Kingdom); Harry Hausler (South Africa), Jamilaya Ismoilova (Tajikistan), Jeffry Acaba (Thailand), Nyan Win Phyo, (Thailand), Paran Winarni (Indonesia), Roger Kamugasha (Uganda), Tenzin Kunor (USA) and Yuliya Chorna (Canada).

The CSTF members are leading efforts to mainstream the voices of TB civil society and survivors in the work of WHO, national TB programmes and multisectoral partners. WHO Global Tuberculosis Programme (GTB) has been ensuring the task force members are an integral part of all priority workstreams, including systematic membership in all guideline development processes. The Progress Report on the UN Political Declaration on Tuberculosis includes CSTF inputs. An overview of achievements, progress and future plans can be found in the progress report here. The report highlights key achievements of the task force since its establishment in late 2018, focusing on high-level engagement and advocacy, impact in TB high-burden countries, achievements in mainstreaming task force voices in the work of WHO, strengthening civil society engagement in the WHO guideline development process, and building common ground between WHO and civil society members to enhance impact.

During 2020, most of the CSTF members’ efforts were aimed at maintaining focus on TB in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Highlights include a multi-country community survey on the impact of COVID on the TB epidemic, and Brazilian civil society national assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on TB and HIV services. Key WHO products related to COVID-19 and mitigating its impact on ending TB were drafted with CSTF inputs.

To catalyze multisectoral action on TB, WHO and CSTF jointly developed the civil society annex to the national assessment checklist for the Multisectoral Accountability Framework for TB (MAF-TB) (available here) to ensure thorough assessment of civil society engagement as part of this process. The tool is being implemented by the national TB programmes. CSTF members are currently actively supporting multisectoral action in more than 25 countries in Africa, Western Pacific and Europe.

In view of the changed landscape due to COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to realign priorities to ensure relevance and responsiveness, following consultation between WHO and CSTF members, it was agreed to convene a three-day virtual meeting on 30 March – 1 April 2021.

Meeting objectives

The meeting objectives were:

1. To take stock of the CSTF activities to date, including the changes and challenges posed due to COVID-19 pandemic; discuss achievements, progress, lessons learned, challenges and solutions;
2. To convene consultation on major themes of interest between CSTF and GTB focal points;
3. To discuss priorities for 2021-2022 by the civil society representatives with WHO Director-General and jointly agree on way forward;
4. To consult with WHO TB network from global, regional and country levels and discuss ways and means to strengthen collaboration at regional and country levels;
5. To discuss civil society members’ suggestions for the task force workplan for 2021-2022.

**KEY ISSUES**

**Ensuring close collaboration with civil society and affected communities at regional and country levels**

**Status and challenges**

Several WHO regional offices shared examples of strong and meaningful engagement with civil society and affected communities, including the CSTF-TB members. Regions are at different stages of ensuring systematic engagement with civil society, and the action that was taken to strengthen this engagement varies, depending on the regional context and priorities. Examples provided by different regional representatives include civil society representation on advisory bodies (Technical Advisory Group of WPRO); in EURO, mature regional stakeholder bodies work in close collaboration with the regional civil society network on key strategic planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation with specific indicators to track the quantity and quality of engagement with civil society organizations in priority countries; in WPRO, WHO has financially and technically supported establishment and operations of a regional platform based on a recommendation from a regional consultation on Pillar 2 of the End TB Strategy; in SEARO, civil society has been leading a number of WHO regional priorities such as efforts to mitigate impact of COVID-19 on TB services and demand generation for TB preventive treatment; in AFRO, WHO is supporting civil-society led initiative to ensure strong engagement of civil society and affected communities in MAF processes in 13 francophone countries.

However, the discussion clearly highlighted strong engagement with civil society engagement at national and subnational levels as an underutilized opportunity in efforts to end TB. This is supported by reportedly limited demand of technical assistance from countries in this area; limited investments in capacity building of civil society and their networks through domestic and external resources; and weaknesses in guidance and efforts to measure the contribution of civil society and affected communities in countries.

**Next steps/Recommendations**

To WHO HQ:

1) Set up a mechanism for sharing of experiences between different regional offices with engagement of country offices. Good practices on civil society engagement in MAF adaptation and implementation should be part of this mechanism with regular engagement with the CSTF-TB;

2) In coordination with the CSTF-TB to develop a set of actions to help boost the engagement of civil society and affected communities at country level, such as inclusion of CSTF-TB input in the WHO guidance on NSP development, input in updated guidance on programmatic reviews (planned for 2nd semester 2021), engagement in GTB coordination calls with regional offices, etc.
3) Develop a set of indicators for tracking the quantity and quality of engagement of civil society and affected communities at county level, in close collaboration with CSTF-TB;

To WHO at global, regional and country levels:

1) All WHO regional offices to ensure regular meaningful consultation with civil society and affected communities. Key topics to be addressed include, but are not limited to:
   - discussing and jointly defining priorities;
   - supporting establishment or nurturing of a functional mechanism to ensure implementation of the jointly defined priorities;
   - mapping existing regional and sub-regional civil society groups and networks;
   - identifying capacity building and funding needs for core activities and a resource mobilization strategy;

2) WHO regional offices to identify and pursue concrete steps to facilitate and promote stronger engagement in countries in coordination with WHO country offices;

3) WHO country offices to proactively support systematic inclusion of civil society engagement in national and sub-national efforts to end TB in all key efforts such as national strategic planning, programme reviews, etc;

4) WHO at all levels to promote inclusion of TB in the work of relevant UN agencies’ agendas, including UN mechanisms involved in the COVID-19 response.

To members of CSTF-TB:

1) All members to promote and capitalize on linkages and coordination with the regional and national networks they work with for stronger civil society engagement. This targets TB networks and mechanisms, as well as those focusing on health and beyond. Members to proactively share and promote good practices in CSTF-TB calls and meetings;

2) Relevant members to proactively promote inclusion of TB in the work of health (and COVID-19) and development groups and networks they work with, as well as efforts on reaching relevant SDGs.

Open dialogue between the WHO DG and CSTF-TB on priorities for 2021-2022

Discussion highlights

Civil society members of the CSTF-TB presented their priorities for 2021-2022 to the WHO DG. They include:

1) Champion, sustain, and accelerate the progress of the TB targets and ensure community and civil society contributions are in the 2023 TB report, with focus on the 10 UN Secretary-General recommendations.
2) Ensure meaningful engagement of civil society and affected community in the TB response through leveraging collaboration with WHO, through policies and guidance, for fostering community systems strengthening and community, rights and gender perspectives. Ensure systematic and meaningful engagement with community and civil society representatives in country visits and events.

3) Build supportive environment for TB affected community and civil society and make sure it is represented at the decision and policy-setting bodies hosted by WHO at global, regional and country level.

4) Ensure systematic consultation with community and civil society representatives in the work of WHO on TB policy setting, programmatic work and processes, and TB-related research. Establish enabling environment for communities and civil society in TB-research policies and in scaling up of innovations: from the global guidelines and in country level guidelines.

5) Make sure Multisectoral Accountability Framework (MAF-TB) processes are participatory and civil society and TB-affected communities are meaningfully involved in all MAF-related processes (baseline assessment, endorsement of findings and recommendations, serving on MAF-TB coordination and high-level review mechanisms).

6) Monitor the impact of COVID-19 on TB and advocate towards improved access to TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment including through integration of TB and COVID-19 responses, as well as scaling up COVID-19 innovations to improve TB services.

Presentation of the priorities was followed by an open discussion with the WHO DG. It focused on what WHO leadership can do to support meaningful engagement with civil society to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on efforts to end TB.

**Outcomes**

1) The CSTF-TB and WHO DG jointly agreed to issue a joint statement calling for action to stop further preventable deaths and suffering due to tuberculosis and recover gains lost during the COVID-19 pandemic;

2) In order to proactively promote the need for strong engagement of civil society and affected communities (including the CSTF-TB members) in all countries affected by TB, it was agreed WHO will reinforce and elaborate on the needed actions in the joint statement through official communication to the WHO country representatives;

3) WHO DG encouraged the CSTF-TB to routinely raise any issues of concern, including around TB and COVID-19, for inclusion in WHO press releases.

**CSTF-TB workplan for 2021-2022**

Two main discussions fed into the development of the CSTF-TB workplan 2021-2022: discussion on the priorities proposed by the civil society representatives, and thematic discussions with WHO GTB leads on key issues of interest (multisectoral accountability, TB and COVID-19, and social protection).
Broad objectives of the workplan align with the priorities presented by the civil society representatives in the meeting (see above section on the open dialogue with the WHO DG). It was agreed the workplan will be finalized over two weeks following the meeting, in close consultation between CSTF-TB and GTB Units. The workplan will include activities, timelines, and focal points. The final CSTF-TB workplan will be shared with WHO regional offices. Review and evaluation of progress on the workplan implementation will take place on quarterly basis and any changes to the workplan will be decided on through a consultative process.
## Meeting agenda

### Tuesday, 30 March 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session 1: Task force civil society members’ priorities for 2021-2022</th>
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| 12:00 – 12:20 | Welcome and introductions  
Moderator: Lana Syed, WHO GTB |

**Welcoming remarks**
- Ren Minghui, Assistant Director-General UHC  
- Tereza Kasaeva, Director GTB

**1 minute Task Force members’ introductions**
- 1 minute each to introduce themselves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session 2: Thematic deep-dives</th>
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<td>12:20 – 13:00</td>
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CSTF member (Jeff Acaba) presentation on civil society members’ priorities |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | Open discussion |

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<tr>
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<th>Session 2: Thematic deep-dives</th>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 – 13:20</td>
<td>TB and COVID-19 (Dennis Falzon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:20 – 13:40</td>
<td>Multisectoral accountability (Tereza Kasaeva, Marzia Calvi)</td>
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<td>13:40 – 14:00</td>
<td>Social protection (Ernesto Jaramillo)</td>
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### Wednesday, 31 March 2021

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session 3: CSTF consultation with WHO TB network at global, regional and country levels</th>
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Moderator: Farai Mavhunga, WHO GTB |

**12:00 – 12:10** Setting the scene and Introductions

**12:10 – 12:40** WHO Regional Offices will share successes and lessons learnt on meaningful engagement with civil society and affected communities,
including ideas on how CSTF can help to maximize the collaborations within each region. 5 minutes per region.

12:40 – 13:40 Open discussion on regional and country experiences with aim to jointly create a vision on how CSTF can engage with different regional and country offices and reinforce collaboration.

13:40 – 14:00 Defining jointly agreed action points

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<th>Time</th>
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Thursday, 1 April 2021

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 13:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 4: Civil Society Task Force on TB open dialogue with WHO DG</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:45</td>
<td>CSTF member presentation of the civil society members’ priorities to WHO leadership. Open discussion with the WHO DG.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 – 13:00</td>
<td>Defining jointly agreed action points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 5: Producing the workplan 2021-2022</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13:15 – 13:45</td>
<td>Workshop for civil society representatives and Secretariat to jointly agree on activities, deliverables, resources, timelines and focal points</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:45 – 14:00</td>
<td>Jointly defining next steps</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td><strong>Closing remarks</strong></td>
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Moderators: CSTF member
            Lana Syed, WHO GTB

Closing remarks