

**MoPH & WHO Joint Press Release:**  
**For the commemoration of World Tuberculosis Day**

**“Stop TB in my Lifetime”**

**H.E Dr. Suraya Dalil, Minister of Public Health, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**Dr. Sima Samar, Chair fo Afghanistan Stop TB Partnership and Director of HRIC,**

**And**

**Dr Ahmed Shadoul, WHO Representative in Afghanistan**

**Kabul 3 April 2012** – Commemorating World Tuberculosis (TB) Day at the Serena Hotel, Dr. Suraya Dalil, Acting Minister of Public Health (MoPH) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, with the Chair of the Afghanistan Stop TB Partnership and WHO stressed the importance of continued support for Afghanistan's TB patients.

The Minister of Public Health reminded us that TB is a curable disease, linked to poverty, malnutrition, stress and other psycho-social disorders resulting from insecurity. New Afghanistan statistics for 2011, from WHO were presented:

- Today, 97% of Afghans have access to the DOTS facilities, compared to 14% in 2000
- 1,197 Health facilities provide TB control services in 2011; compared to 10 facilities in 2000
- 242,347 TB cases were treated from 2001-2011
- Estimated 53,000 new TB cases annually
- 28,167 TB cases identified and responded to through DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short) Program, part of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS).
- 10,500 TB deaths recorded in 2011

Afghanistan Stop TB Partnership and WHO illustrated how women and children are directly affected by TB. 66% of TB patients are women. Women with TB are twice as likely to give birth to a premature, or low-weight baby; and four times as likely to die during childbirth. This year a gender research project has been launched to understand why so many women in Afghanistan become TB patients.

WHO launched the “Stop TB in my lifetime” campaign to highlight the life of children with TB. WHO estimates that 10% of all estimated TB cases in Afghanistan are children. Every day a child dies of TB in Afghanistan, but we can save that life with a daily 3 cent pill. Last year, 670 children under the age of 15 were diagnosed with TB. The majority are girls (465 cases).

MoPH, Stop TB Partnership and WHO called on donors to sustain this valiant health program. To support better training for health workers, for example so they can recognize symptoms in children, or automatically also test children when a parent is sick. Afghanistan needs more support to actively find TB patients. The TB associations in Afghanistan of rehabilitated patients, must be supported to spread the word about curable TB and help identify TB in their communities. Only through a communal response, from the international community to local Afghan neighborhoods, can we spread the good news that TB is curable. The hard work and commitment of the Ministry of Public Health, the Stop TB Partnership, our local partners and WHO have proven that Afghanistan provides quality healthcare for every Afghan Woman, Man and Child to “Stop TB in our lifetime.”

**For more information, please contact:**

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