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См. наш номер:		На Ваш номер:

Date: 25 January 2018

Dr David Sergeenko
Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave.
0119 Tbilisi
Georgia

Dear Sir,

**Ministerial policy dialogue on HIV and related comorbidities in
eastern Europe and central Asia
Amsterdam, Netherlands, 23 July 2018**

The European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) is the only WHO region where the number of new HIV infections is increasing. In 2016, over 160 000 people were reported as newly diagnosed with HIV in our Region, nearly 80% of them from eastern Europe and central Asia. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals' target of ending the HIV epidemic, it is important to consolidate our efforts and accelerate national responses in line with the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region, which was endorsed by the Regional Committee for Europe at its 66th session in September 2016.

In this context, and in view of the forthcoming 22nd International AIDS Conference (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 23–27 July 2018), I should like to invite you to a ministerial policy dialogue meeting on HIV and related comorbidities, where participants will provide information on state-of-the-art innovative approaches with financial sustainability in mind and discuss good practices from your countries. To this end, my teams are currently working with your national experts on a compendium of good practices for the implementation of the Action plan, which we intend to launch during the event. This ministerial meeting will also create a platform for me to interact with you on strategic issues and their policy implications.

Please find enclosed the outline of the event. The provisional programme will be shared with you in due course.

We will cover travel and accommodation costs related to your participation and that of your senior-level expert in this event. For further information, your team can contact Dr Masoud Dara, Communicable Diseases Coordinator, at euroHIV@who.int.

Your participation in the above-mentioned meeting will be very important for the successful outcome of this significant event.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours very truly,



Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab
WHO Regional Director for Europe

Encls:

Outline of the meeting

Copy for information to:

Dr Sofiko Belkania, Head, Executive Department, National Counterpart, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, 144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave., 0119 Tbilisi, Georgia

Mr Shalva Tsiskarashvili, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Rue Richard-Wagner 1, CH-1202 Genève, Switzerland

H.E. Mr Gigi Gigiadze, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Georgia, Nybrogade 10, 1st. Floor, 1203 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Mr Niels Scott, United Nations Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme, UN House, 9 Eristavi St., 0179 Tbilisi, Georgia

Dr Marijan Ivanusa, WHO Representative and Head of WHO Office, WHO Country Office, Georgia, 81 Barnov Street, Apt.4, 0179 Tbilisi, Georgia



Ministerial Policy Dialogue on HIV and related comorbidities in eastern Europe and central Asia

Amsterdam, Netherlands
23 July 2018

Address of the venue (to be
confirmed) **xxx**

12 January 2018

Original: English

Ministerial policy dialogue on HIV and related comorbidities in eastern Europe and central Asia

Preamble

The European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) is the only WHO region where the number of new HIV infections is increasing. In 2016, over 160 000 people were reported as newly diagnosed with HIV in our Region, nearly 80% of them from eastern Europe and central Asia (EECA). Despite the progress achieved in reducing tuberculosis (TB) morbidity and mortality, countries in eastern Europe and central Asia also have a significant burden of TB, particularly drug-resistant TB, as well as viral hepatitis. TB/HIV coinfection has also increased fourfold in the Region over the last decade, meaning that 12% of TB patients are now coinfecting with HIV.

At its 66th session in September 2016, the WHO Regional Committee for Europe endorsed, in its resolution EUR/RC66/R9, the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region.¹ The Action plan guides Member States in accelerating their response to the HIV epidemic. The goals and targets are in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the multisectoral strategy for 2016–2021 of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the WHO Global health sector strategy on HIV, 2016–2021.

On 25 and 26 September 2017, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in collaboration with UNAIDS, convened a meeting of HIV programme managers, at which representatives of EECA countries and States not members of the European Union or European Economic Area presented

¹ Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016 (EUR/RC66/9; http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/315649/66wd09e_HIVActionPlan_160560.pdf, accessed 17 January 2018).

the status of their national HIV strategies and action plans. Many good examples were identified that deserve to be acknowledged as pioneering practices in the Region. Countries reported national efforts to revise and optimize their HIV testing and treatment policies. Several countries have started the “treat all” approach² and others have endorsed new national HIV testing and treatment protocols and/or implemented nationwide innovative interventions, such as self-testing, and increased national funding. Building on the lessons learned from successful interventions and programmes, there is an urgent need to scale up effective preventive measures, early diagnosis and quality treatment and integrated/coordinated care for all, including key populations, to curb the epidemic. In addition, various countries in the EECA region are currently in a process of transition from international donor funding towards national funding of the HIV response. Finding innovative and inclusive mechanisms for financing the HIV response in this context is a pressing topic within the EECA region

The WHO Regional Office for Europe in collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands will convene a high-level meeting entitled “Ministerial policy dialogue on HIV and related comorbidities in eastern Europe and central Asia” on 23 July 2018, back-to-back with the 22nd International AIDS Conference (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 23–27 July 2018).

Scope and purpose

The ministerial policy dialogue on HIV and related comorbidities aims:

- to present the countries’ pioneering approaches to sustainable, innovative, and evidence based response to HIV and related comorbidities and discuss the opportunities to scale these up in line with the resolution EUR/RC66/R9;
- to exchange information on sustainable financing;
- to launch the compendium of good practices for the implementation of the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region.

Expected outcomes

- Good practices on political commitment in response to HIV and related comorbidities are shared among countries.
- A report of the event including conclusions and the next steps is prepared

Format

The meeting will be in a round-table/panel discussion format, lasting 2.5 hours, with short country presentations and a moderated discussion, followed by a reception.

Participants

² Antiretroviral treatment is recommended for all people with confirmed HIV infection, however severely affected their immune system, i.e. regardless of their CD4 count.

- Ministers of health and high-level delegates from countries in eastern Europe and central Asia
- WHO Regional Director for Europe and her team, WHO headquarters
- UNAIDS, European Commission and ECDC
- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Host-country representatives: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands

Venue

Amsterdam, Netherlands