

SUMMARY SHEET		
Agenda Nr. 1.06-9.0	Subject	Laboratory Strengthening
For Information	For Discussion	<u>For Decision</u>
<p>Introduction</p> <p>There is increasing recognition in the Stop TB strategy that laboratory services are often the weakest link in DOTS implementation, especially in efforts to expand DOTS-Plus and TB/HIV programmes (see the second Global Plan to the Stop TB 2006–2015). In 2004, the DOTS Expansion Working Group (DEWG) declared laboratory strengthening as the highest priority for TB control. Laboratory activities are cross cutting issues for the three implementing working groups (i.e., DEWG, DOTS-Plus and TB/HIV working groups), and unless urgent attention is focused on systematic and comprehensive expansion of laboratory efforts for quality assured sputum-smear microscopy, culture, and drug susceptibility testing (DST), we will fail to achieve TB-related Millennium Development Goal (MDG).</p>		
<p>Summary</p> <p>Critical and immediate needs include: the development and dissemination of standardized training materials, the organization of training courses, technical support to countries to elaborate and implement a national plan to strengthen the laboratory network, expanded quality assured culture and DST capacity, and increasing the pool of laboratory experts capable of assisting countries in improving performance. The laboratory strategy to improve performance of TB diagnostic services developed by the laboratory strengthening subgroup (SLCS) provides a framework and clear directions to address these urgent needs.</p> <p>The SLCS has made substantial progress in raising the importance of the role of the laboratory in TB control, in performing country assessments, in facilitating the provision of technical assistance and in developing external quality assurance (EQA) guidance for sputum smear microscopy. Related training programs have supported these activities. However, activities are still limited to few countries and regions as members of the SLCS do not have sufficient resources to support a large number of countries in preparing and implementing their laboratory strengthening work plans. Additionally there is a lack of staff and funding resources available to the SLCS to develop the training tools and guidance that countries will require to expand quality assured culture and DST</p>		
<p>Decisions requested from the Stop TB Coordinating Board</p> <p>The Chair and Members of the SLCS request the Board to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The establishment of the Laboratory Capacity Strengthening Working Group (to replace the SLCS); 2) The Chair of the newly established Working Group will be a member of the Stop TB Coordinating Board; and 3) Provide technical support to develop specific resource mobilisation plan for laboratory strengthening group to raise 15 million \$US needed for the implementation of the Laboratory Strengthening Strategic Approach 2006 - 2009 		
Next steps and time frame		
What: Resource Mobilization strategy		
Who: Secretariat/Sub-group		
Timeframe: To Sept 2006		
Focal Point: Leo Blanc		