

## CROSS SECTORS SYNERGY IN TB RESPONSE: A KEY IN OPTIMIZING INDONESIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC BONUS

3 August 2019—According to the Global TB Report (WHO, 2018), there is no country in the world that is free from tuberculosis. However, Indonesia is among the top three countries with the highest TB burden world-wide. In fact, recent data suggest that 842,000 Indonesians fall ill with TB every year and 23,000 people are diagnosed with drug-resistant TB. 75 percent of people with TB in the country are from the productive age group. This situation threatens one of Indonesia's national agenda to improve its human resources quality and competitiveness as outlined in the National Mid-term Development Plan 2020-2024.

Over 100 business leaders, youth, champions in cross-sectors development and public health as well as TB ambassadors gather together to advance the TB issue beyond the UN HLM at a gala dinner event 'A Night in Unity' held in Soehanna Hall, Jakarta. This event is co-hosted by the Ministry of Health of Indonesia and Stop TB Partnership Indonesia, supported by Stop TB Partnership (global) with CISDI as its implementing partner to raise multi-stakeholder national awareness that TB is a social, economic and political problem for everybody.

Dr. Viorel Soltan, Team leader of the Country and Community Support for Impact Team at the Stop TB Partnership (Geneva) stated, "In 2017, drug-resistant TB claimed 230,000 lives and this resulted in an economic loss of 17.8 billion USD within a year. The urgency to end this epidemic is acknowledged by world leaders as outlined in the political declaration during the UN High Level Meeting on TB, with a goal of ending TB 2030. Indonesia's leadership and achievements would contribute positively to the global efforts in ending TB. Stop TB Partnership (global), together with Stop TB Partnership Indonesia, works to optimize multi-sectorial approach in tackling this global problem."

In this momentum, the Minister of Health, Prof. Dr. dr. Nila Moeloek, SpM(K) emphasized that other sectors should prioritize TB. "Currently the Government of Indonesia is building and expanding infrastructures to connect regions, which would increase people's mobility across provinces and islands. If all of us do not underline this problem and join efforts to end TB, this infection would spread and poses larger burden to the country", she said.

Faced with the End TB 2030 target, Indonesia needs urgent actions from different sectors to end the epidemic. The Minister of Health added, "Media can elevate attention to this issue and raise public awareness about the urgency to end TB in prints and online. The transportation sector must ensure that good quality infection control is implemented in all transportation systems. Those active in the social and entrepreneurship sectors, public and private, need to get involved in providing social protection and empower TB patients to overcome their socioeconomic challenges during treatment, especially for them to have good nutrition intake. In the education sector, schools health units can be mobilized to screen TB among teachers and children."

The founder of Stop TB Partnership Indonesia, Mr Arifin Panigoro, also highlighted the importance of cross-sectors collaboration. "During the UN High-level Meeting in September 2018, world leaders and partners read the political declaration on the fight against TB. One of the points addressed in the declaration is mobilizing multi-stakeholders to close gaps in the TB response. This political commitment needs to be translated at the national level by leaders in the public and private sectors. From a moral or economic standpoint, investing in strengthening our TB response comprehensively, including for research and development, is a logical answer to help Indonesia achieve the elimination target."

Mr Arifin Panigoro further elaborated, "TB also affects the private sector. At the macro level, the productivity of a corporation would decrease due to premature deaths and sick workers. Indonesia's demographic bonus would turn into a public health burden without cross-sectors partnerships to end TB."

New perspectives and input from multi-stakeholders with different backgrounds would bring new ideas that stimulate innovation in planning and implementation of TB strategies. One of the means is the engagement of Goodwill TB Ambassador(s) to disseminate information consistently to the general public.

In her speech, dr. Sonia Wibisono said, "TB needs serious attention from us because this infectious disease is airborne and can affect anyone. The risk of contracting TB is not only for those living in slums but also doctors, nurses, young executives and even people working in the media and entertainment." During the event, dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro uttered, "We now live in an online and digital era, everyday each of us can utilize digital media to build TB awareness through our contents in Vlog, YouTube, Instagram and other social media channels."

Ully Ulwiyah, Head of Tough Drug-Resistant TB Fighters foundation or Yayasan Pejuang Tangguh Tuberkulosis Resisten Obat (PETA TB RO) highlighted that TB does not only affect patients' health but also brings severe socioeconomic burdens to their households. "Patients and their families are vulnerable to stigma and discrimination as well as to a loss of income because they need to go for treatment on a daily basis for an extended period of time (up to 2 years). This situation could severely impact the patient access to health care facilities", she said.

In his talk about #PatunganGizi campaign (nutrition assistance for poor TB patients campaign) in kitabisa.com, an Indonesian crowd-funding site, Budi Hermawan, the Head of Indonesia TB Patient Association explained, "In their journey to actively participate in the society, TB patients not only need medications to fight the disease. Nutritious food is fundamental in boosting patients' immune systems and optimizing their recovery. Unfortunately, not all TB patients can afford adequate food. Therefore, we need additional support and resources to offer TB patients the best possible chances to survive ". Certainly, fighting stigma and discrimination as well as establishing a nationwide social protection for TB patients deserves a much better attention and support from other sectors beyond health.



## STOP TB PARTNERSHIP INDONESIA

Stop TB Partnership Indonesia (STPI) is a partner of Stop TB Partnership global. Established since 2013, STPI is a cross-sectors partnership platform supporting the Indonesian National TB Program (NTP). This organization consists of 75 local and international partners working together to end TB. STPI supports NTP to achieve national targets and harmonizes collaborations and advocacy to influence decision-making about TB and communities affected by the disease. STPI secretariat works under the strategic direction of its board of directors and advisors, consisting of public health experts, academics, clinicians, professionals in development as well as private and public sector representatives.

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