

## Visit of Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO SEAR to Myanmar



*Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO SEAR visiting University of Public Health*

visit was to discuss with staff from WHO Country Office on WHO staff matters and managerial issues.

The Regional Director also visited the University of Public Health and the University of Nursing in which he met the respective rectors and the faculty members. The Regional Director and the concerned rectors discussed issues related to further strengthening the existing libraries of the University of Public Health and the University of Nursing and for capacity building of faculty members. ■

**D**r Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO SEAR visited WHO Country Office, Yangon, Myanmar from 25-27 February 2010. The purpose of the Regional Director's

## World TB Day 2010 "On the move against Tuberculosis: innovate to accelerate action"

**T**he Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO, social organizations, related ministries, and other partner agencies, commemorated the World TB Day 2010 on 24 March 2010.

This year's theme is: *On the move against Tuberculosis: innovate to accelerate action*. It calls for:

- i) Finding new and better tools to fight TB; ii) Reaching more people with TB care services; iii) Promoting uptake of innovative technology;*
- iv) Forging new and strengthen partnership to reach the Global Plan's targets; v) Finding innovative ways to fund the fight against TB*

In his speech, H. E. Prof Kyaw Myint, Minister for Health, highlighted the accomplishments of National TB Control Program that were achieved thru partnership.

He emphasized the need to: increase momentum on TB control, use the new innovative ways suitable for the country, and implement TB control in line with this year's theme.

On the same occasion, Dr. Leonard Ortega, Acting WHO Representative to Myanmar, read out the message of Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO SEARO. The Regional Director's message highlighted the achievements and the challenges in TB control in SE Asia Region, and calls on the partner agencies to renew their commitments to achieve the goal of eliminating TB as a public health problem.

The other highlights of the commemoration are the exhibits by NTP, JICA, MMA TB, Pact Myanmar, PSI, and World Vision. ■



*H. E. Prof Kyaw Myint, Minister for Health, delivering the speech at the World TB day 2010 in Nay Pyi Taw.*

## Commemorating the seventh anniversary of leprosy elimination in Myanmar

On 6 February 2010, the Ministry of Health, Myanmar organized the ceremony for the Seventh Leprosy Elimination Commemoration Day at the main conference hall of Ministry of Health, Nay Pyi Taw. The ceremony was to mark the seventh anniversary of the declaration for achievement of leprosy elimination status in Myanmar that was announced on 6 February 2003. Elimination of leprosy as a public health problem indicated that leprosy prevalence in the country became less than one per 10,000 population.

The commemorative ceremony was opened by the H.E. Deputy Minister for Health, Prof Paing Soe who delivered an opening speech. In his speech, His Excellency highlighted the progress and achievements of leprosy control programme in Myanmar over the past years based on the WHO Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Disease Burden due to Leprosy (2006-2010). He also mentioned that despite the progress and success of

the programme there are still areas in the country, known as pocket areas, where considerable number of new cases are being detected. Moreover, he indicated the need for focusing hard-to-reach areas and forging partnerships with various agencies including the national NGOs for rehabilitation of persons affected with leprosy. In addition, he explained the theme for this year "Promote self-care-prevent disability". He also stated that the National Leprosy Control Programme has been preparing for future steps in line with the WHO "Enhanced Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Disease Burden due to Leprosy, (Plan Period: 2011-2015)".

Later, H.E Deputy Minister delivered the prizes to the winners of essay competition on the leprosy elimination. Dr Leonard Ortega Ag WHO Representative to Myanmar and Representatives of IMCJ also delivered the prizes. After the ceremony, the dignitaries and invited guests viewed

the mini-exhibition displayed by the Ministry of Health featuring various activities of leprosy control programme in Myanmar.

The official ceremony was followed by the series of talks on leprosy programme in Myanmar by a number of speakers including officials from the national leprosy control programme, central health education bureau, senior leprosy consultant from central special skin clinic of Yangon General Hospital, one of the famous writers and two persons affected with leprosy who have been cured from disease, sharing their experiences. ■



*Dr Leonard Ortega, Acting WHO Representative to Myanmar delivering the prize to the winner of essay competition on the leprosy elimination at the 7<sup>th</sup> Leprosy Elimination Commemoration Day in Nay Pyi Taw.*

## HIV sentinel surveillance Training in Nay Pyi Taw

22-24 February 2010

**H**IV surveillance is the systematic and regular collection of information on the occurrence, distribution and trends in HIV infection and factors associated with infection for use for public health action. Surveillance is conducted among populations who are at the highest risk of acquiring HIV and thus, are most critical for interventions. Since 1992, the National AIDS Programme has been carrying out annual HIV sentinel sero-surveillance survey.

The sentinel groups included are pregnant women attending the antenatal clinics, new military recruits, blood donors as low risk population, injecting drug users, male who have sex with male, female sex workers and male patients attending sexually transmitted infection (STI) clinics as high risk populations. Male STI patients and Antenatal samples are collected in all AIDS/STD Team sites, IDU samples in Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina, Lashio, Taungyi and Muse, FSW samples in the same area except Kyaingtong for FSW instead of Muse, MSM, Military recruits, blood donors in YGN & MDY and new TB patients in selected townships. TB patients sample were included since 2006 in HSS program and new TB sentinel sites were expanded year by year and now 20 sites have been implementing HSS survey. In order to implement HSS in accordance with standard operational procedure, the National AIDS Programme organized intensive training for new TB sites and for newly implemented AIDS / STD team sites.

In 2008 HIV sentinel surveillance, HIV prevalence was the highest among MSM followed by IDUs. FSWs HIV prevalence has been 18.45

and Male STI patients 5.4%. Among AN women the median prevalence was 1%. For New TB patients, New Military recruits and Blood donors HIV prevalence have been 2.5%.

The HSS refresher training has been provided by National AIDS program, National TB program Manager and Microbiologist for allied subject matter before the start of survey with a wide overview of HIV epidemic, survey methodology, ethical issue, HIV testing strategy, eligible criteria and other essential issues. AIDS/STD and TB teams were notified to collect the eligible samples by following the criteria from the guideline and filling forms systematically for data precision in order to achieve the quality survey data to present the national figure.

In this training, the survey result of 2009 was released for the case study or example for discussion and clarification from each site. There was time for discussion to improve the HSS survey year by year from the experience of each HSS because all 34 sites STD team leaders were present together and shared their experiences. By this way the trainees will be able to implement HSS for better result from lesson learnt in the training.

For 2010 HIV Sentinel Survey, all sentinel sites laboratories have been assigned to do the HIV testing and then all positive cases and 10% of negative cases samples have to be sent to State/ Divisional standard laboratory. Revised HSS manuals 2010 in English with updated information were shared to trainees during training. HIV sentinel surveillance 2009 results will be disseminated to compare the trend of HIV prevalence in Myanmar with previous year soon.



# World Cancer Day 2010

"Cancer can be prevented too" is a global campaign launched on World Cancer Day by the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) to increase public awareness on the prevention of cancer and how a number of simple steps can significantly reduce the risk of developing cancer later in life.

Celebrated every year on February 4th, World Cancer Day is led by UICC and its member organizations with the support of the World Health Organization and key partners.

**"Today' children, tomorrow's world"** - prevent cancer with healthy habits"

This is a five year programme, launched on World cancer Day 2007.

It aims to raise awareness about the ways we can prevent cancer through the choices we make. 2007 introduced the overall theme

From 2008 to 2011, each year will focus on a different issue:

- 2008 - give children and young people a **smoke -free environment**
- 2009 - encourage an energy - balanced life-style based on **healthy diet and physical activity**
- 2010 - raising awareness on the prevention of **cancer related infections**
- 2011 - teach children and teenagers to avoid UV exposure by being **"sun smart"**

Globally, cancer accounts for one in eight of all deaths - more than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined.

Each year, over 12 million people receive a cancer diagnosis and 7.6 million die of the disease. If no action is taken, the worldwide cancer burden is expected to reach 26 million new diagnoses and 17 million deaths by the year 2030, with the most rapid increases occurring in low - and middle-income countries.

The good news is that experts estimate that 40% of cancers can be prevented.

The risk of you or your family developing cancer can be significantly reduced through simple measures:

- Stopping tobacco use and avoiding exposure to passive smoke
- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Avoiding excessive sun exposure
- Regular physical activity
- Eating healthily
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Protecting against cancer-causing infections



## important dates

25 April 2010	World Malaria Day "Counting Malaria Out"
31 May 2010	World No Tobacco Day "Gender and tobacco with an emphasis on marketing to women"
14 June 2010	World Blood Donor Day "New blood for the world"