



## ACT Asia-Pacific! - the Region's Activists' Coalition on TB

APCASO and GCTA are proud to announce the launch of **ACT Asia-Pacific!**, a regional coalition of individuals and community and civil society groups working for effective, people-centred, rights-based, and sufficiently and strategically resourced TB responses.

**ACT Asia-Pacific!**, the region's first TB activists' coalition, emerged from a GCTA and APCASO-led regional TB activists' convening held from 8 to 10 November 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. TB and DR-TB survivors, Stop TB Partnership Challenge Facility grantees, TB Reach grantees, Global Fund TB primary and sub-recipients, members of the World Health Organization (WHO) TB Civil Society Taskforce, as well as representatives of regional and national HIV networks participated at the meeting. The meeting was made possible with funding support from the Global Fund External Relations Division and GCTA via Global Fund's Community Rights and Gender Special Initiative (CRG SI). APCASO support the initiative through core funding from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and APCRG Platform funding from CRG SI. **ACT Asia-Pacific!** is an affiliate of GCTA, with APCASO elected to serve as the coalition's host.

The formation of **ACT Asia-Pacific!** is highly timely, particularly in the context of a region accounting for over 850,000 TB related deaths each year, having 10 MDR-TB high burden countries, and where access to treatment and diagnostics remains a significant challenge.

**ACT Asia-Pacific! Commitments to Action** agreed at the 8-10 November 2016 meeting:

### 1. We will ACT to give TB the political attention it deserves.

TB is now the number one infectious disease in the world, with Asia-Pacific bearing the biggest brunt of infections. The world has the means to prevent TB deaths and disabilities. That it fails to do so is inexcusable, and violates principles of human rights, social justice, public health, and sustainable development. TB continues to fall dismally low in the world's, and in the region's, development and political agenda.



**ACT Asia-Pacific!** enjoins the international and regional development communities, governments, funders, researchers, and civil society movements (PLHIV, treatment access, anti-poverty, human rights, women's, health, right to food, people with disabilities, etc.) to give TB the political attention it deserves, matched with the resources needed to reach the global goal of ending TB by 2030. We likewise call for more effective TB/HIV responses integration.

## **2. We will ACT to present an alternative model to the pervading bio-medical approach to TB.**

We will advocate for TB responses that:

- is centred on people and supports the meaningful participation of communities in all levels of the response;
- respects, protects and advances human rights, including of TB key populations; and
- engrains gender equity and gender transformative policies and programmes as a critical means to an effective TB response.

## **3. We will ACT to overcome barriers to TB treatment and diagnostics access.**

We will work to build the needed support from different stakeholders to overcome key challenges to universal and equitable access to TB drugs and diagnostics, including:

- High prices, essential health technologies remaining out of reach for millions
- Weak health and community systems capacity, weak supply chain management and procurement
- Inefficient drug regulatory controls
- Slow movement and low investments in TB research and development
- Discrimination in the health care sector
- Poorly developed adherence/patient support mechanisms
- Absence of informed and mobilised communities and activists to challenge and demand for change in the status quo

## **4. We will ACT towards securing adequate and strategic investments for TB, making sure that these investments go to the right interventions, including by communities.**

Within 1 year of our formation, we aim to:

- secure core and programme funding for **ACT Asia-Pacific!** We believe in power of collectives such as **ACT Asia-Pacific!** in fostering solidarity, cross-learning and support; coordinating and inspiring joint advocacies; supporting community capacity building and mobilisation; and rallying for support from key stakeholders for TB.
- establish **FACT\$ (Funding Champions for TB)**, a funder-counterpart of **ACT Asia-Pacific!** whose members will commit to funding and mobilising resources for TB.
- support civil society advocacy and capacity development for effective, strategic, sufficient and sustained, community-centred, rights based TB investments – from both domestic and foreign donor sources. We will develop and submit a regional Global Fund funding request in 2017 for this.

Within 5 years of our formation, we aim to:

- see increased investments in TB, including an increased ability within the Global Fund to support TB responses that is not at the expense of HIV or malaria funding.
- see increased effectiveness of joint HIV/TB programmes and budgets, including through greater involvement of community and civil society representatives in key decision-making and monitoring related to these.

*“This is a really important, timely and potentially game-changing initiative. Bringing together such a great group of experiences and passionate advocates from the region was a vital first step.”*

## 5. We will ACT to support a coordinated and capacitated TB community and activist movement.

We are organizing for better representation and leadership in TB framework-setting, policy development, advocacy, programme implementation and monitoring, at global, regional, national and local levels.

*“To support the TB response and the work of the community and civil society funding the implementation action plan of this coalition will be critical.”*

We will draw on the strengths, experiences, lessons, and base of networks and partners we have built through our work on the ground, and in other movements, particularly in HIV.

We will work in a spirit of open dialogue and partnership with TB stakeholders. But **ACT Asia-Pacific!** will also own the responsibility of calling duty bearers to task – including the WHO, Stop TB Partnership, The Union, national TB programmes, as well as, health, research and development sectors, pharmaceutical companies, governments and development partners, technical agencies, and ourselves-communities and civil society.

Our work shall be rooted to jointly agreed values and principles, primary of which is the respect for the legitimate right and capacity of communities and TB key populations to determine the best solutions to problems that affect their lives.

**ACT Asia-Pacific!**'s work will be guided by **IMPACT Asia-Pacific**, the coalition's *Advocacy Implementation Strategy* developed from the 8-10 November 2016 convening. The strategy is currently being refined by APCASO, GCTA and the **ACT Asia-Pacific!** Steering Committee, planned to be finalized by February 2017. **IMPACT Asia-Pacific** is based on the 5 key themes of the Commitments to Action outlined above.

### **ACT Asia-Pacific! Leadership and Coordination**

The following are the Steering Committee (SC) members of **ACT Asia-Pacific!** elected on 10 November 2016. These SC members will serve for an interim term of 1-year.

Chuob Sok Chamreun (Khana, Cambodia), Co-Chair  
Elvi Shiahahan (MAP, Indonesia), Co-chair  
Blessi Kumar (GCTA/India)  
Daniel Marguari (Spiritia Foundation, Indonesia)

Eloisa Teng (MDR-TB Survivor, Philippines)  
Maura Elaripe (IGAT Hope, Papua New Guinea)  
RD Marte (APCASO, Asia-Pacific)

A full-time coordinator will be hired pending funding availability. Until then, GCTA and APCASO have committed to providing coordination support.

### **Get Involved. Support ACT Asia-Pacific!**

1. Email APCASO and GCTA to be a member of **ACT Asia-Pacific!** if you:

- are an individual from the region who is/has been affected by TB, or is working on TB or with TB key populations in the region, or
- belong to a community or civil society group working on TB or with TB key populations in the region,
- and support **ACT Asia-Pacific!**'s goal and **Commitments to Action**

As a member, you will have the power to help shape the work of the coalition through online discussions and consultations. You will be added to the Coalition's mailing list, and will be considered for key face-to-face meetings.

2. Support **ACT Asia-Pacific!** by helping us establish **FACT\$ (Funding Champions for TB)** if you or your organisation:

- is committed to funding/raising resources for TB;
- could give core funding or activity support to **ACT Asia-Pacific!**;
- wants to champion the advocacy for people-centred, rights-based, and sufficiently and strategically resourced TB responses in the region.

3. Follow news, updates and developments from **ACT Asia-Pacific!** and spread these information to your networks. Email GCTA and APCASO if you want to be sent news on and related to **ACT Asia-Pacific!** Sign up to APCASO and GCTA's respective mailing lists and like us on Facebook for broader updates.

Contact APCASO: [apcasoteam@apcaso.org](mailto:apcasoteam@apcaso.org), [actasia-pacific@apcaso.org](mailto:actasia-pacific@apcaso.org) / Web: [www.apcaso.org](http://www.apcaso.org) / Facebook: [apcaso](https://www.facebook.com/apcaso)  
Contact GCTA: [secretariat@gctacommunity.org](mailto:secretariat@gctacommunity.org) / Facebook: [Global Coalition of Tuberculosis Activists](https://www.facebook.com/globalcoalitionoftbactivists)

### **About GCTA and APCASO**

The **Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA)** was conceptualized as a global platform to bridge the gap between civil society organizations and other stakeholders, while ensuring that communities are involved in all TB processes. The aim of the GCTA is to ensure that the voices of those affected are articulated at every level, and are key in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of all TB interventions. This is achieved through setting up sustainable networks among civil society and key affected populations, and ensuring that those affected have the capacity and information necessary to advocate for their needs. Since its inception in October 2013, the GCTA has contributed significantly to the global TB agenda through its network of activists, achieving a number of significant milestones along the way. The GCTA was formalized as an organized body and has established a physical space, located in New Delhi, India. The coalition has also founded a strong online presence through a formal website and several other modes of social media.

**APCASO** is a regional civil society network of community-based and non-government organisations on HIV, health and social justice, with a focus on advocacy and community capacity development in Asia and the Pacific. We support and promote the role of CBOs and NGOs – particularly those representing communities most in need, namely people living with HIV, sex workers, people who use drugs, MSM, transgender people, migrant workers, and mobile populations, including young people and women within these populations – in advancing a rights-based social development and health agenda.

**APCASO** hosts the **Asia-Pacific Platform on Communities, Rights and Gender (APCRG)**, a coordination and communications platform that supports civil society groups, key population networks, non-governmental and community-based organisations to push for the inclusion of CRG-related interventions in different HIV, TB, and malaria programmes across the region. It is one of the six regional platforms that were established with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (the Global Fund) under the Community, Rights, and Gender Special Initiative.