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TB community and stakeholders meet for Stop TB awards at UNGA 78 (2023) High-Level Meetings

Prior to the High-Level Meeting for TB, on Wednesday 20 September the Stop TB Partnership (STP) held a side meeting at which it presented the Stop TB Partnership Awards Celebrating Excellence & Resilience in the TB Response; the 2023 Kochon Prize and the Round 12 Challenge Facility for Civil Society.

Delegates, the TB community, partners and activists mingled to network before the meeting was introduced by the STP's Executive Director, Dr. Lucica Ditiu.

Kochon Prize

Dr. Ditiu's introduction was followed by opening remarks from the Chairman of the Kochon Foundation, Mr. Doo-Hyun Kim.

The [Kochon Prize](#) is awarded annually by the Stop TB Partnership to individuals and/or organizations that have made a significant contribution to combating TB. It is endowed by the Kochon Foundation, a non-

profit foundation registered in the Republic of Korea, and consists of a \$65,000 award.

The Kochon Prize was established in 2006 in honour of the late Chairman Chong-Kun Lee, founder of the Chong Kun Dang Pharmaceutical Corporation and Kochon Foundation in Korea, who throughout his career was committed to improving access to low-cost lifesaving antibiotics and anti-TB drugs. “Kochon” was a pen name that he used.

His story is an inspirational one, showing how despite being born into poverty anyone can rise above humble beginnings to become a philanthropist. Born in a small Korean village in 1919, Chairman Lee was too poor to access higher education. Despite his privations he grew up with a constructive and optimistic view of the world. Through Chairman Lee’s diligence, frugality and initiative, the small drug store he founded in 1941 grew to become the Chong Kun Dang Pharmaceutical Corporation, one of the most important Korean pharmaceutical manufacturers. While managing his business, he realized how the high price of drugs would negatively affect access to life-saving drugs like antibiotics and anti-TB drugs. These drugs were expensive because most were imported. Chairman Lee decided he could reduce prices through bulk production of drugs via synthesis and fermentation technology.

In the 1960s, the Government and people of Korea were still struggling in their fight against TB. The country’s weak economy did not allow poor patients to afford the then-expensive anti-TB drugs. This changed when Chairman Lee’s company began producing anti-TB drugs such as Ethambutol and Rifampicin using its own technology and became the major supplier of both raw materials and final products.

Once Chairman Lee’s business was stable, he began to look into how to share his achievements with society. His early philanthropic achievements were to sponsor employees to go to night school and he then decided to provide young people with better educational opportunities. In March 1973, he established the Kochon Foundation to award scholarships, grants and research funds. By his death in 1993, the Kochon Foundation assets had grown from the initial \$20,000 in 1973 to \$21 million.

The Kochon Foundation is a non-profit organization and is legally and financially independent from the Chong Kun Dang Pharmaceutical Corporation. Chairman Lee was adamant that his mission was to supply better medicines to everyone who needed them. The Kochon Foundation is unable to supply medicines, but it implements his philosophy. The Kochon Foundation’s desire to actively contribute to the fight against TB resulted in the establishment of the 2014 Kochon Prize.

This year’s Kochon Prize, themed “Recognizing Healthcare Workers Who Refuse to Give Up on TB Treatment in Conflict Zones,” [honored two organizations and one individual](#), including the Public Medical Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Southern Kherson Pulmonary Tuberculosis Medical Center, and the Director of the Chernihiv Regional Medical Center, Ms. Zhanna Karpenko, for their efforts to establish TB treatment systems and protect patients in wartime.

“All Ukrainians are heroes and symbols of unity, and we are sincerely grateful to the international community and the Kochon Prize for recognizing our efforts on their behalf,” said this year’s winner, Dr. Yana Terleeva of the Public Medical Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

“This year’s winners are true medical professionals who never gave up on their patients, even in the midst of a war that destroyed the healthcare system,” said Kim Doo-hyun, President of the Chong Kun Dang Kochon Foundation. “We hope that this award will be a great support for the various medical and relief activities that organizations and individuals will carry out in the future.”

Keynote speeches

Before the Kochon Award, the Commissioner of the Korea Disease Control & Prevention Agency (KDCA), Dr. Youngmee Jee, gave the first Keynote Speech. Later in the program, two further Keynote Speeches were made by First Deputy Minister of Health, Ukraine, Dr. Sergii Dubrov, and the First Lady of Malawi, Mrs. Monica Chakwera .

Challenge Facility for Civil Society (CFCS)

Dr. Ditiu then proceeded to announce the winners of the CFCS. CFCS is the STP grant mechanism for TB-affected community and civil society organizations (CSOs) to transform the TB response so that it is rights-based, gender-transformative, people-centered and accountable. Strengthening community and civil society actors is an ethical and programmatic imperative in this pursuit. Since 2007 STP has issued nine calls for proposals. Since then, STP has awarded \$6 million in grants to 162 organizations in 44 countries and to global and regional community networks. See the [STP website](#) for details of these.

At last night’s function, STP announced that 114 organizations from 38 countries and six regions will receive funding under CFCS Round 12.

With \$13.5 million available in funding thanks to support from USAID and L’Initiative implemented by Expertise France, Round 12 is the largest-ever investment dedicated to TB civil society and TB-affected community organizations. CFCS grants work to ensure community engagement, promote and protect human rights, and advance gender equity (Community, Rights and Gender (CRG) in TB) as well as enhancing accountability and generating demand, ambition and political will for increased investments and innovations to end TB.

Stop TB Partnership received 406 applications for funding under CFCS Round 12, exceeding \$41 million in demand. An external evaluation committee reviewed proposals and based on the available funding selected the recipients. CFCS Round 12 will integrate a dedicated technical assistance package to strengthen TB survivor networks and their engagement at country, regional and global level.

Despite the unprecedented levels of investment, unmet quality demand from TB civil society and TB-affected community organizations remains high at \$12.9 million, which demonstrates the need for ongoing efforts to close the funding gap that currently exists for CRG in TB.

Stop TB Partnership welcomes the organizations funded under Round 12 and looks forward to collaborating over the coming 12 months.

The meeting closed with remarks from the Assistant to the USAID Administrator – Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, Ms. Michele Sumilas; the Global Health Ambassador, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France, H.E Mrs. Anne-Claire Amprou; and a civil society representative and TB survivor Mrs. Rhea Lobo.

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