estimated incidence of MDR/RR-TB was 200,000, with India alone accounting for 130,000.

People with HIV accounted for 11% of all new TB cases estimated globally in 2015, while in the SEAR that number stood at 4.7% or an estimated 227,000 cases. An estimated 74,000 patients with HIV-associated TB died in 2015 in the Region.

The SEA Region has made considerable progress in its campaign to control tuberculosis, reaching the Millennium Development Goal for 2015 of halting and reversing TB incidence. The Region also realized its “Stop TB” target of halving the TB mortality and prevalence rate (against 1990 levels).

While the region’s achievements in TB control over the past two decades have been laudable, the goal of TB elimination worldwide by 2030 remains a formidable challenge. Some persistent barriers to TB control in the SEA Region include:

- Absence of universal health coverage, as well as limited access to quality health services and fully subsidized treatment for chronic diseases;
- Widespread shortage and uneven distribution of well-trained, well-equipped and motivated health workers;
- Insufficient data collection capacity, leading to gross neglect of TB monitoring and under-reporting of incidence;
- Failure to address poverty, undernutrition and risk factors that adversely influence exposure to tuberculosis;
- Insufficient strategies to address populations at risk, including targeted screening and investigation;
- Lack of regulatory systems and weak accountability mechanisms, as well as poor governance in public health management;
- Insufficient long-term strategies to address the socioeconomic factors that germinate tuberculosis – poverty reduction, better nutrition, better living and work conditions, as well as strategies to mitigate the impact of migration.
- Above all, there is an over-reliance on donors and insufficient resource mobilization even in countries with small funding gaps. National governments average just 41% of current budgets for NTPs.

In view of the new realities the response has to be matching. To overcome these challenges the Region as a whole will have to work to a plan, accelerate its current efforts and adopt newer treatment and diagnostics emerging from the pipeline. Above all it has to reach out to patients in far-flung remote locations. The current rate of decline in TB incidence will not take us too far. The chapter Bending the Curve gives you an outline on how the current TB curve can bend to reach the 2030 End TB goals.

Besides, the high rate of relapse, the emergence of drug resistant Tuberculosis poses a major challenge to ending TB.