The Interrelationship Between the Voluntary Association
And the Government in Tuberculosis Control Work in Korea
Presented at VIII Eastern Region TB. Conference, IUAT, Nov. 1972, Sydney, Australia,

Chan Sae Lee, M.D.
Vice-President, Korean National Tuberculosis Association

1) The brief history of Korean National Tuberculosis Association (KNTA)

The Voluntary Korean Tuberculosis Association (KNTA) was officially established in 1953 by several thoughtful physicians.

The next year, 1954, it joined to IUAT and since has been growing continuously.

It started mass X-ray survey by the mobile unit in 1956.

It’s Bacteriological Laboratory began to work since 1962.

By this time the KNTA’s activity became a very remarkable one and the fund raising...
business by the sale of Christmas Seal began to grow very fast.

In 1963 the amount of the sale jumped up to more than double of the previous one and then it continued to increase likewise tempo until 1969. when it reached to about 20 times of 1962 or almost 100 times of 1954.

This means that it has been well accepted and well supported by the Korean peoples as well as by the Korean Government recognizing the necessity of KNTA and it's good accomplishment in the tuberculosis control works.

However since 1970 KNTA began to feel some resistance against it's fund raising campaign and this is thought to be the time to realize that the private voluntary organization like KNTA would not or should not grow so fast forever.

2) The relationship with the government and the limitation of it's capacity.

As the KNTA fund raising increased it's assistantships to the government in the tuberculosis control works also increased rapidly and it became to be the big coworker in every field.

For example, in 1971 the financial and technical involvements of KNTA in the practical tuberculosis control works are so high that the many kinds of the surveys, educations for the field workers, and central laboratory works were almost 100% carried out by KNTA alone.

Also many kinds of subsidies for tuberculosis control medical officers and nurses and other field workers were paid by KNTA.

Furthermore the government is planning to transfer the BCG production laboratory to KNTA's full responsibility.

However the point of limitation in KNTA's capacity of assistantship to the government is appeared to be rather near when judging from the status of feeling the resistance on it's fund raising campaign recently. On the other hand one must also re-evaluate the proper task capable by the voluntary organization like KNTA and remind the government for the responsibility in the tuberculosis control works, which is still very important in Korea. The tuberculosis is a chronic infectious disease wide spread in the nation with a prevalence rate of 4.2% and the estimated mortality rate of about 80 per 100,000 population.

3) The probable important role of the voluntary organization.

Each voluntary organization has it's own purpose and KNTA also should have own.

However any voluntary organization working in the health field has a common aim, that is, to assist governmental works voluntarily as an initiator of the new projects by it's freer.

Workability than the government and as a supporter of governmental policies if agreed upon.

The world is progressing and the problems of health must be met by better solubility. For this the government must have the full responsibility after all. And the voluntary organization would be an assisting fellow to the government.

For an example, if there comes a sudden flood or a fire, the initial emergency works would be always performed by some of volunteers near by, it must be followed by a systematic large scale measures of the responsible government to result a full recovery and to establish and effective prevention of those unwanted damages. Thus the volunteers role in the emergency is a very definitely limited one as an initiator of the situation.

The control works of a chronic disease like tuberculosis could not be simply compared with such accident, however the role of voluntary organization as an in itiator would be the same as ever and it could never be the government like fully responsible administrator by it self.

Now if we look into our KNTA's activity in the works of tuberculosis control, it's commitments became too large beyond it's proper capacity in a sense.

We hope that the government would take over those well established or routine works of
tuberculosis control by proper increase of governmental budget.

The governmental officers in the health field also well aware of this problem, but the national budget allocation for tuberculosis as well as total health services are too small than what we normally required.

The reasons of this have been frequently explained that because of the country's poor resources and too large expenditures for the military preparations forced by the internal crises and by the international war politics as well. Now, fortunately, the moods of peace in this country appeared to come in along with the international aires and the productivity of the nation has been also much increased since.

This must be taken as the time of starting point leading to rapid improvement of health budgets with a priority for tuberculosis control, since it is the most serious kind of problems at present in Korea. In this case, naturally the KNTA must play an active role in assisting the efforts of the governmental officers of the health at the budgetary campaigns by giving an effective influence to the responsible sections as requested.

The necessity of proper services for tuberculosis control must be taken not only as a final goal of a nation in fully developed welfare state, instead, it would be an urgent prerequisitory service properly provided by the government, if the government wants to have a normal development, physically as well as economically.

4) The future plans of KNTA

Knowing that the KNTA must perform voluntarily the important roles of the initiator and act as a supporter of the governmental policies for the betterment of the peoples health in Korea, it should continue the strong efforts as ever.

However the heavy burdens of present involvements of routine practical works in the tuberculosis control should be decreased gradually as the government increases it's budget properly.

Actually, The KNTA started a system of a research institution of tuberculosis in 1970 to prepare the future roles of the KNTA. It would act as a fact finder and also as a policy maker in the control of tuberculosis in Korea to assist the government.

It's main directions of the research for a time being would be toward to the improvement of the effects of present fieldworks of tuberculosis control and to assist rapid increase of government tuberculosis budget by transferring and introducing the serious informations of tuberculosis to the responsible persons.

Those problems are, as we all aware of, not so easy in any country, however, after all it is our task to overcome with the continuous efforts we promised to do so as we gathered to form a voluntary organization of the KNTA.

We have no doubt you, the Members of IUAT would give us the encouragement for the success sooner.

Thank you for your listening.