



FORTY-SEVENTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

WHA47.32

Agenda item 20

12 May 1994

Onchocerciasis control through ivermectin distribution

The Forty-seventh World Health Assembly,

Noting the report by the Director-General on onchocerciasis control through ivermectin distribution;¹

Aware of the threat to health posed by onchocerciasis in endemic countries in the African Region, the Region of the Americas and the Eastern Mediterranean Region in which some 18 million people suffer from the disease, including one million blind or severely visually disabled persons;

Recognizing with appreciation the success achieved by the Onchocerciasis Control Programme in West Africa, at present operating in 11 countries, with vector control and, in recent years, ivermectin distribution to selected populations;

Concerned that onchocerciasis is still a public health problem with serious socioeconomic consequences in the remaining endemic countries in the three regions concerned;

Appreciating that the disease can be brought under control through single annual doses of ivermectin, the drug provided free of charge by the manufacturer to countries where onchocerciasis is endemic;

Noting the recent initiatives for the control of onchocerciasis in the Americas, and the creation of an international nongovernmental organizations coordination group for ivermectin distribution, collaborating with WHO,

1. REQUESTS the Member States concerned:

- (1) to prepare national plans, if they do not already exist, for the control of onchocerciasis through vector control, where applicable, and the regular distribution of ivermectin to populations in need;
- (2) to take advantage of ivermectin distribution to strengthen primary health care, including appropriate health and public information;
- (3) to consider setting up mechanisms for collaboration with nongovernmental or other organizations through national coordinators, national committees or similar bodies, for support to, and coordination of, ivermectin distribution schemes;

¹ Document EB93/46.

(4) to make full use of the existing application procedure for obtaining ivermectin for public health purposes free of charge from the manufacturer;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to pursue actively the initiatives taken for onchocerciasis control through ivermectin distribution, in consultation with collaborating nongovernmental and other organizations and interested institutions;

(2) to develop further and disseminate rapid epidemiological methods for assessment and mapping of onchocerciasis in the remaining countries where it is endemic;

(3) to determine the most appropriate sustainable modalities of delivery, including evaluation of the cost effectiveness in relation to vector control;

(4) to ensure technical cooperation with those countries for the development of national plans for onchocerciasis control;

(5) to promote further and coordinate potential support for ivermectin distribution to combat onchocerciasis with other specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, such as UNICEF and the World Bank;

(6) to report back to the Executive Board and the Health Assembly on further progress made, as appropriate.

Fourteenth plenary meeting, 12 May 1994
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