

The Regional Committee,

Having considered the progress report of the Regional Director on the eradication of poliomyelitis in the Region;¹

Acknowledging the achievements made by Member States towards eradicating poliomyelitis, especially the national immunization days that were conducted in six countries in the Region during the low disease transmission seasons of 1995 and 1996;

Noting the decrease in the number of reported cases which meet the clinical criteria for poliomyelitis in 1995 to a provisional total of 474 as at 1 September 1996, the lowest ever reported to the Regional Office;

Noting also that under conditions of improving surveillance, the only cases of indigenous wild poliovirus-associated poliomyelitis were reported from Cambodia and the southern region of Viet Nam in 1995 and in 1996 up to 1 September;

¹ Document WPR/RC47/8 Rev.1.

Noting further that the Regional Commission for Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis met in Canberra, Australia, in April 1996 and decided upon criteria and a plan of action for certification, including the need to establish national certification committees, and a subregional certification committee for Pacific islands;

Acknowledging also that surveillance and laboratory performance are not yet at the highest standards of reliability that will be required for the certification of poliomyelitis eradication;

Recognizing that routine immunization programmes and other disease control initiatives such as measles control and neonatal tetanus elimination are strengthened by the poliomyelitis eradication initiative;

1. EMPHASIZES that the poliomyelitis eradication initiative in the Region must remain a high priority until global certification is achieved;
2. URGES all Member States which are still reporting poliomyelitis cases:
 - (1) to make special efforts to improve the quality and coordination of supplementary immunization activities, so that all children in the target age group are immunized, including those in border areas, high risk areas and in mobile populations;
 - (2) to exchange information, especially on surveillance activities;
 - (3) to continue to develop virological surveillance and the laboratory network to attain the levels recommended for certification of eradication of poliomyelitis, as stipulated by the Regional Commission;
 - (4) to prepare for the establishment of national committees which will gather and review documentation for the certification of the eradication of poliomyelitis, as stipulated by the Regional Commission;
 - (5) to maintain high routine immunization coverage;
3. URGES all Member States which are not reporting poliomyelitis cases:
 - (1) to continue to maintain high routine immunization coverage;
 - (2) to continue to develop surveillance systems capable of detecting any occurrence of poliomyelitis cases, either indigenous or imported, and of demonstrating the absence of circulation of wild poliovirus, as stipulated by the Regional Commission;
 - (3) to establish national committees by the end of 1996, which will gather and review documentation for the certification of the eradication of poliomyelitis, as stipulated by the Regional Commission;
4. THANKS the international partners who have been instrumental in the success of the poliomyelitis eradication initiative, particularly UNICEF, the governments of Australia, Canada, France, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and the United States of America, and Rotary International, Rotary International District 2650 of Japan and other nongovernmental organizations;
5. URGES also all governments and international partners to maintain their commitment and continue to provide support until global eradication is certified;

6. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (1) to work closely with countries to establish national certification committees and the subregional certification committee for Pacific islands, and to improve the quality of surveillance and laboratory systems to the level required for certification;
- (2) to facilitate the exchange of information and coordination of poliomyelitis eradication efforts with other WHO regions;
- (3) to continue to use the expertise and systems developed for poliomyelitis eradication for the control of other vaccine-preventable diseases, including accelerated measles control.

Eighth Meeting, 13 September 1996
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