

The Regional Committee,

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

Noting with great satisfaction that on 29 October 2000 the Regional Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication in the Western Pacific concluded that the transmission of indigenous wild poliovirus had been interrupted in all countries and areas of the Region and therefore the Region could be certified as poliomyelitis-free;

Acknowledging the achievements of Member States in providing high-quality documentary evidence of the absence of wild poliovirus transmission in each country and area of the Region;

Noting that substantial progress has been made to establish national laboratory inventories of wild poliovirus infectious and potentially infectious materials;

Noting further that the Regional Certification Commission will continue to function and to meet annually to review progress reports from all countries and areas on their maintenance of poliomyelitis-free status;

Acknowledging that, although much progress has been made globally, poliomyelitis is still endemic in neighbouring regions, and importation of wild poliovirus into the Western Pacific Region will remain a possibility until global eradication is achieved;

Concerned that a recent outbreak of poliomyelitis reported from the Dominican Republic and Haiti was caused by vaccine-derived polioviruses circulating in areas of very low immunization coverage;

Appreciating the support of the international partners who have supported poliomyelitis eradication, particularly UNICEF, the governments of Australia, Japan, and the United States of America, Rotary International, and Rotary International District 2650 of Japan, and other nongovernmental organizations;

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to sustain the highest possible quality of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) and virological surveillance both in order to rapidly detect and respond to importation of wild poliovirus from outside the Region and to fulfil the requirements of the Regional and Global Certification Commissions;
- (2) to achieve and maintain high routine immunization coverage, supported by supplementary immunization in high-risk areas, at least until global certification is achieved, in order to protect against importation of wild polioviruses and vaccine-derived polioviruses;
- (3) to achieve Phase 1 of laboratory containment of wild poliovirus infectious and potentially infectious materials by completing national inventories of laboratories which may hold such materials;
- (4) to continue to implement poliomyelitis eradication activities until certification of global eradication is achieved;

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director to continue:

- (1) to work closely with Member States to ensure that certification-level standards of AFP and virological surveillance are maintained, at least until global certification is achieved;
- (2) to collaborate with Member States to ensure that high routine immunization coverage is achieved and sustained, and supplementary immunization activities are conducted in high-risk areas;
- (3) to work with partner agencies and governments to ensure that external support is available to sustain high-quality surveillance and immunization, at least until global certification is achieved;
- (4) to raise the issue of the feasibility of converting the existing network of national poliomyelitis reference laboratories to a network of national enterovirus laboratories at the next meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on the Expanded Programme on Immunization and Poliomyelitis Eradication;
- (5) to report to the Regional Committee on progress of poliomyelitis eradication activities, including laboratory containment of wild poliovirus infectious and potentially infectious materials, until global eradication is achieved.

¹ Document WPR/RC52/5.