From: Chief, Smallpox Eradication

To: Smallpox Staff

Subject: Progress Report 19 - Target Zero

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## 1.0 Overview

In support of the special campaign for smallpox this year, the Director-General has proposed and the Executive Board has agreed that $900 000 additional in funds be made available. This will provide the absolutely vital minimal additional assistance necessary to accelerate programmes in the four remaining endemic countries. Plans for use of these funds have been developed and the plans are already being implemented. Meanwhile, efforts are now being made to find further funds so as to permit all programmes to operate at the maximum possible level.

In all, some 35 WHO short-term consultants will be working with the programmes during the first five months this year. Some are now actively engaged but the majority will be joining the programme between end February and mid March to help accelerate interruption of transmission immediately before the rainy season.

In brief, all possible support from every quarter is now being mobilized for the drive this year. There is an enormous task ahead of us but I am confident that, with determination and dedication in the field, the goal of '0' by December can be achieved.

## 2.0 Pakistan

The past few weeks have brought unexpectedly discouraging news from Pakistan. The steadily declining incidence in Sind was abruptly reversed during January, primarily as a result of spreading outbreaks in southern Sind - Hyderabad District and, more recently, the adjacent Tharparkar District, being the principal problem areas. The problem in Hyderabad District had been identified as early as mid-November and additional staff were assigned for special programme activities soon after. Reasons for the failure to control smallpox in this area despite the considerable effort which has been made will need to be critically scrutinized.

Meanwhile, the situation in Punjab Province has not improved. The Lahore outbreak which began in May has still not been controlled. In January, 9 new outbreaks and 79 cases were discovered while 20 old outbreaks were under follow-up. Meanwhile cases have spread from Lahore to adjacent districts - 9 outbreaks and 94 cases have recently been identified in three districts. It is again worth noting that Punjab Province had virtually interrupted transmission by late spring but all too quickly relaxed its vigilance. Importations from neighbouring Sind occurred and infection spread.

Baluchistan Province continues to report a steady trickle of cases but despite the comparatively few foci, has not been able to stop indigenous spread. Finally, importations from both Baluchistan and Punjab have occurred in Northwest Frontier Province which is again engaged in a struggle to stop further spread.

Recent reports indicate that activities throughout Pakistan have now been strengthened, administrative problems resolved and additional staff recruited for the programme. Despite the recent setbacks, Pakistan still has fewer known foci than the other endemic countries with less than 100 villages and towns infected by smallpox during the past month. It is clear, however, that greatly improved surveillance-containment activities will be required to stop transmission.

## 3.0 Ethiopia

Ethiopia presents a far brighter picture with smallpox incidence declining in January and with barely half as many cases reported as were detected a year ago. The difficult mountainous provinces of Begemdir and Gojjam are now under full surveillance but surprisingly few cases are being found. Sudanese teams are now providing special assistance in the border areas of these provinces. Most cases are now being reported from Wollo Province where severe drought has resulted in considerable population movement and Hararghe which has experienced a number of importations from Wollo. Additional teams have strengthened the programmes in both provinces and programme staff are optimistic that the situation is coming under control.

## 4.0 Bangladesh

Bangladesh is now recording a reduction of more than 60% in smallpox incidence from that of a year ago. Few cases are being found in southern and eastern Bangladesh and none of the major cities are known to be infected. Problems areas are in the north in Mymensingh, Rangpur and Rajshahi Districts where a great deal of work will be required to achieve effective control. Shortages of petrol and lack of involvement on the part of local health staff are major factors which presently are impeding progress. If present efforts to alleviate these difficulties are successful, a nil incidence by June, possibly as early as April is still within sight.

## 5.0 India

The programme in India continues to move in high gear and plans have now been made to increase in March the number of special epidemiologists from 34 to 46.

Of the seven southern states, three are now reporting cases. Maharashtra which, except for a single imported case, had detected no cases since August, discovered in January spreading outbreaks in Bhandara District. The outbreaks had begun in September but had been concealed by district authorities. Seven villages and one town in three primary health centres are known to be infected. Orissa continues to report cases following importations from Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh. Seventeen importations were discovered during the first three weeks of January alone - including 12 from Bihar, 4 from West Bengal and one from Bangladesh.

Despite this, state authorities appear to have the situation under good control - a remarkable achievement! Andhra Pradesh also continues to record a low incidence associated with outbreaks in three northern districts but with a recently launched special campaign it is expected that these should be able to be quickly contained.

Of the eight western states, continuing transmission is believed to be present only in Jammu and Kashmir where a major epidemic continues in three of the Kashmir Districts. A special epidemiologist has just been assigned for full-time work in this area.

Of the four problem states of the central area, progress in three - Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal appears hopeful but in Bihar, major epidemics throughout most of the northern part of the state are proving problematic. Additional epidemiologists have been assigned and more will be added within the month.

While the problems in India are still numerous, considerable efforts are now being made to cope and positive results are being observed in most areas. The notable exception is the group of states in the eastern wing where smallpox is spreading extensively, reporting is still poor and efforts to control the problem are still well below what is required.