

WHA17.43 Smallpox Eradication Programme

The Seventeenth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Director-General² on the present situation of smallpox in the world and on the progress so far achieved towards the eradication of the disease from endemic areas;

Noting that the Expert Committee on Smallpox which met in January 1964:

(a) recommended that in each smallpox eradication campaign a comprehensive plan of action must be prepared and that its aim should be to cover 100 per cent. of the population, and that special attention should be paid to the age-groups in which the disease most frequently occurs, as shown by the analyses of age-specific attack rates, and to new-born children and pregnant women in whom the mortality is very high; and

(b) considered that the use of freeze-dried vaccine is absolutely essential in hot climates and under conditions of difficult communications, especially for adequate revaccination;

Recognizing that, in order to ensure the success of the programme, sufficient quantities of potent freeze-dried vaccine and freeze-drying equipment should be made available as necessary to countries in endemic areas developing eradication programmes;

Noting that, while some countries have taken commendable steps to eradicate smallpox, many others are hampered in their efforts by lack of material support, particularly freeze-dried vaccine and other imported supplies and transport;

Noting with appreciation the donations of freeze-dried vaccine to the Organization by the Governments of the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and

Recognizing that the need for freeze-dried vaccine for eradication programmes during the next two years is of the order of two hundred million doses,

1. URGES those countries where the disease is still present, and which have not initiated eradication programmes, to plan and implement as soon as possible programmes of eradication following the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Smallpox;

2. INVITES countries able to do so to contribute to the programmes by making substantial voluntary contributions in cash or kind to enable the Organization to provide freeze-dried vaccine and other necessary materials and equipment to countries with sound eradication programmes requesting such assistance; and
3. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to prepare a further comprehensive plan for the world-wide eradication of smallpox;
 - (2) to provide, under the future regular programme and budget of the Organization—if necessary at the expense of lower-priority activities—for making good the shortfall of the vaccine required, and of other essential supplies and equipment, to countries developing eradication programmes; and
 - (3) to report on the programme at future sessions of the Executive Board and of the Health Assembly.