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RESOLUTION

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REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

EM/RC54/R.3  
September 2006

Fifty-fourth Session

Agenda item 6(b)

**Neglected tropical diseases: an emerging public health problem in the  
Eastern Mediterranean Region**

The Regional Committee,

Having reviewed the technical paper on neglected tropical diseases: an emerging public health problem in the Eastern Mediterranean Region<sup>1</sup>;

Concerned at the burden, including the economic burden, imposed by neglected tropical diseases, including dengue fever, dracunculiasis, leishmaniasis, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, trachoma and trypanosomiasis, on the poorest and most vulnerable population groups in the Region;

Recalling World Health Assembly and Regional Committee resolutions calling for the control, elimination or eradication of the following neglected tropical diseases: leprosy (WHA44.9, EM/RC42/R.8), onchocerciasis (WHA47.32, and WHA59.25), dracunculiasis (WHA44.5), lymphatic filariasis (WHA50.29, EM/RC47/R.11), trachoma (WHA51.11 and WHA59.25), schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis (WHA54.19), human African trypanosomiasis (WHA56.7 and WHA57.2), buruli ulcer (WHA57.2) and leishmaniasis (WHA60.13, EM/RC40/R.7).

Taking into consideration the global strategies promoted by WHO and the fact that the control/elimination of these diseases have been successful in many countries;

Recognizing the fact that any neglect of these programmes in terms of policy support, resources, research and implementation of cost-effective interventions may result in a costly resurgence/re-emergence of these diseases;

Acknowledging that neglect of tropical diseases perpetuates poverty and hinders national health and socioeconomic development;

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<sup>1</sup> Document no. EM/RC54/4

Acknowledging also the urgent need to address these diseases and the increased political will and commitment at global and regional level to do so;

Considering the fact that effective and operationally feasible interventions for most of these diseases are available and that these interventions can be implemented even in resource-poor settings, and that Member States are committed to eliminating the targeted diseases;

Convinced that the intensive control and elimination of these diseases would have a quick and dramatic impact on poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

1. **CALLS UPON** Member States to:

- 1.1 Give high priority and political commitment to the control of these diseases, include them in the national development plans and allocate appropriate budgetary support for prevention and control;
- 1.2 Develop national plans of action to scale up prevention and control of neglected tropical diseases, taking into account existing global and regional targets and strategies for disease control, and the need to work with other sectors and partners;
- 1.3 Sustain successful control activities in low transmission areas in order to eliminate schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminth infections, and to give high priority to implementing or intensifying control of schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminth infections in areas of high transmission, while monitoring drug quality and efficacy;
- 1.4 Strengthen partnerships at global, regional and national level, including the private sector, to make use of the opportunities afforded by the increased interest in and commitment to poverty reduction;
- 1.5 Invest in operational research in discovery, development and delivery of new medicines, vaccines and diagnostic products;

2. **REQUESTS** the Regional Director to:

- 2.1 Continue to support Member States in their capacity-building efforts, development of appropriately targeted programmes, and production of necessary guidelines;
- 2.2 Support operational research in the field of neglected tropical diseases, particularly where directed towards practical implementation of available prevention and control strategies.