

**RESOLUTION**

**ONCHOCERCIASIS CONTROL IN THE WHO AFRICAN REGION:  
CURRENT SITUATION AND WAY FORWARD** (document AFR/RC57/5)

The Regional Committee,

Cognizant of the contribution of the Onchocerciasis Control Programme (OCP) to economic development and poverty alleviation in West Africa;

Mindful of the risk of resurgence of the disease in West Africa;

Concerned about the risk of losing US\$ 2.5 billion investments, including the cost of donated ivermectin for elimination in the OCP and African Programme on Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) countries;

Considering 30 years of investment by the affected ex-OCP countries, and 10 years by APOC and development partners in 19 countries outside the ambit of the OCP;

Aware that the blackfly has a flight range of over 400 kilometers;

Recognizing the risk of reinvasion of countries that are now onchocerciasis-free and where many productive economic development activities have begun;

Recalling the Yaoundé Declaration to accelerate the control of onchocerciasis and to increase the financial commitment of the affected countries in order to safeguard the gains already made;

Noting that donor support and the APOC Programme will cease before or by 2015;

1. **STRONGLY URGES** the affected Member States:
  - (a) to include onchocerciasis control activities in government development agendas, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Sector Wide Approaches and regular budgetary mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing;
  - (b) to release national budget funds to accelerate control of onchocerciasis and sustain the gains already made;

- (c) to intensify cross-border activities to strengthen surveillance and avoid spillage of infection to freed zones;
- (d) to integrate community-directed onchocerciasis treatment into the health care delivery system at all levels in order to maintain high treatment coverage and reduce the prevalence of the disease;
- (e) to forward comprehensive national statistics and reports annually to the WHO Regional Office to monitor progress;

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to continue advocating for onchocerciasis control in order to achieve the elimination goal;
- (b) to provide technical support to countries for the integration of onchocerciasis control into the health care delivery system;
- (c) to report to the Regional Committee in 2008 and every two years thereafter on progress made towards the elimination of river blindness in Africa;
- (d) to extend the life of APOC to 2015.