

PROGRAMME MANAGERS MEETING ON NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES IN THE ASIA SUB-REGION



13–14 March 2018
Manila, Philippines

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

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MEETING REPORT

PROGRAMME MANAGERS MEETING ON NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES
IN THE ASIA SUBREGION

Convened by:

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

Manila, Philippines
13–14 March 2018

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NOTE

The views expressed in this report are those of the participants of the Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Asia Subregion and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the conveners.

This report has been prepared by the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific for Member States in the Region and for those who participated in the Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Asia Subregion in Manila, Philippines from 13 to 14 March 2019.

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Keywords:

Neglected diseases - prevention and control / Regional health planning / Zoonoses

ABBREVIATIONS

CL-SWASH	Community-led initiatives to eliminate Schistosomiasis by combining deworming with WASH interventions
<i>Cs</i>	<i>Clonorchis sinensis</i>
DALY	disability-adjusted life year
DHIS	District Health Information System
DOH	department of health
EITB	enzyme immunotransfer blot
ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
GIS	geographic information system
IgM	immunoglobulin M
IgG	immunoglobulin G
LAMP	loop-mediated isothermal amplification
LF	lymphatic filariasis
MDA	mass drug administration
NTD	neglected tropical disease
MIS	management information system
<i>Ov</i>	<i>Opisthorchis viverrini</i>
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY

The Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Asia Subregion was convened on 13–14 March 2018 in Manila, Philippines. The meeting was attended by 14 participants from eight countries in Asia, six temporary advisers, representatives from two partner agencies and five World Health Organization (WHO) Secretariat members.

Significant progress has been made in Asia towards elimination of lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem and elimination of blinding trachoma. Cambodia was congratulated for its recent validation by WHO of elimination of lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem and also validation of elimination of blinding trachoma. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was also congratulated for its recent validation by WHO of elimination of blinding trachoma. Ongoing efforts to accelerate elimination of schistosomiasis in Asia through mass drug administration and improvement of sanitation coverage in collaboration with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes were also acknowledged.

With this, the landscape for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in the Western Pacific Region is fast changing, and new situations and opportunities are emerging. While preventive chemotherapy has been highly effective in reducing the prevalence and burden of some NTDs such as lymphatic filariasis and trachoma, the limitations of relying only on preventive chemotherapy to control and eliminate other NTDs, particularly schistosomiasis and other foodborne and zoonotic NTDs, are increasingly evident. Participants shared experiences, challenges and lessons learnt in strengthening multisectoral interventions and surveillance for control of remaining zoonotic and foodborne NTDs in Asia.

As more countries achieve elimination targets, there is an urgent need to establish and sustain post-elimination surveillance and provision of universal care for patients in post-elimination countries. Experiences of post-elimination surveillance of lymphatic filariasis in China and the Republic of Korea were shared.

With success in eliminating LF and trachoma as the most prevalent public health problems throughout the Region, diversity in disease endemicity and progress across the Western Pacific Region are expanding, with more focus on zoonotic and foodborne diseases in Asia and on skin-related NTDs in the Pacific. Against this new backdrop, it has become difficult to develop a one-size-fits-all strategy for control and elimination of NTDs. NTDs are now included in the Sustainable Development Goals. Universal health coverage will be key for NTD control and elimination, helping sustain gains by ensuring that needed health services reach all people, particularly marginalized and neglected populations. The SDGs present opportunities to accelerate progress on NTDs through whole-of-system multisectoral interventions, such as improvements in water and sanitation, food safety, environmental health and veterinary public health, in addition to health services.

Acknowledging the changing NTD landscape and remaining challenges in Asia, the meeting suggested three strategic pillars for the draft Regional Framework for Control and Elimination of NTDs: surveillance (including response), strengthening multisectoral cooperation, and universal access to interventions and community empowerment through effective risk communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Meeting organization

The Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Asia Subregion was convened on 13–14 March 2018 in Manila, Philippines. The meeting was attended by 14 participants from eight countries in Asia, six temporary advisers, representatives from two partner agencies and five World Health Organization (WHO) Secretariat members. The full list of participants is available in Annex 1, and the programme agenda is presented in Annex 2.

1.2 Meeting objectives

The objectives of the meeting were:

- 1) to share among countries the progress, emerging challenges and lessons learnt since the 2016 NTD Programme Managers Meeting in accelerating elimination and sustaining control of NTDs relevant to Asia;
- 2) to update the programme managers on the latest WHO guidance, tools and strategies for elimination and control of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs); and
- 3) to review and provide inputs to the draft Regional Framework for Elimination and Control of NTDs in the Western Pacific from the subregional perspective.

2. PROCEEDINGS

2.1 Opening session

Dr Shin Young-soo, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific, warmly welcomed the participants. The Regional Director commended Member States for the significant progress made towards eliminating and controlling NTDs in the Western Pacific Region. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive whole-of-system approach improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and strengthening collaborations with animal health and food safety programmes to accelerate the control and elimination of NTDs. He also called for continued vigilance in the fight against NTDs with sustained surveillance even after Member States had achieved elimination of NTDs, to help prevent recrudescence of transmission. It was through global collaboration that NTDs would become diseases of the past. In closing, Dr Shin thanked the participants for sharing their expertise and experience to guide the Region in the fight against NTDs.

2.2 Updates

2.2.1 WHO global updates on control and elimination of NTDs

Dr Bernadette Abela-Ridder presented the overview of global updates on NTDs with a focus on the linkage between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 and the work to control and eliminate NTDs. There are five primary interventions for control and elimination of NTDs: innovative and intensified disease management; preventive chemotherapy; veterinary public health; vector ecology management; and WASH. Most NTDs require a combination of multiple interventions, and these interventions are aligned with a number of SDGs. Ensuring universal health coverage (SDG 3.8) and availability and sustainable

management of water and sanitation (SDG 6) are examples of goals and targets that intersect with and influence control and elimination of NTDs.

Significant global progress has already been made in control and elimination of some of the NTDs such as lymphatic filariasis and trachoma, through preventive chemotherapy, supported by generous pharmaceutical donors making large-scale donations of medicines. However, to advance the control and elimination of many other NTDs, particularly zoonotic and foodborne NTDs that are highly prevalent in the Western Pacific Region, other interventions in WASH, vector control and veterinary public health will also need to be scaled up. There are effective tools to control and manage most NTDs, but investments for supplies of medicines and vaccines, and the piloting and scale-up of such tools in the public health context are still lacking. There are still significant shortcomings in the availability of highly specific and sensitive diagnostic tools and techniques for many NTDs that are inexpensive and easy to use in the field. Progress on mapping of zoonotic and foodborne NTDs to target interventions and measure the impacts of control interventions is also limited in many countries.

The WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 is structured around three interconnected strategic priorities to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages: achieving universal health coverage, addressing health emergencies and promoting healthier populations. These strategic priorities are supported by three strategic shifts: stepping up leadership at all levels through health diplomacy and advocacy as well as multisectoral actions; driving the public health impact in every country with strategic and technical support, policy dialogue and enhanced service delivery; and focusing global public goods on impact through normative guidance, research and innovation. The work to fight against NTDs is in line with and further enhances progress on this strategic direction. Dr Abela emphasized that WHO would continue its efforts in partnership with Member States and partners to address

2.2.2 Regional progress and challenges on control and elimination of NTDs in the Western Pacific

Dr Aya Yajima presented the progress in the elimination and control of NTDs in the Western Pacific Region. There are 15 NTDs prevalent in the Region, including scabies and snakebite envenoming that have been recently added in the portfolio. The specific targets of the *Regional Action Plan for Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Western Pacific Region (2012–2016)* included eliminating lymphatic filariasis (LF), schistosomiasis, blinding trachoma and leprosy, reducing cases of yaws, and reducing morbidity from soil-transmitted helminthiasis and foodborne trematodiasis in respective countries.

Six (Cambodia, Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, Niue, Tonga and Vanuatu) out of 22 endemic countries have been validated for having eliminated lymphatic filariasis in 2016–2017. Seven other

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