# REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE GLOBAL COLLABORATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PESTICIDES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 24–25 JUNE 2010



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The seventh meeting of the Global Collaboration for Development of Pesticides for Public Health was held at the Centre International de Conférence de Genève in Geneva, Switzerland, on 24–25 June 2010.

Dr Hiroki Nakatani. Assistant Director-General for HIV/AIDS. Tuberculosis, Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases in the World Health Organization (WHO), opened the meeting and read a message<sup>1</sup> from the Director-General. WHO is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the WHO Pesticide Evaluation Scheme (WHOPES), established in 1960 by the Director-General, with the approval of the World Health Assembly, to evaluate pesticides for the control of vector-borne diseases and to prepare quality standards for the guidance of Member States. During those 50 years, WHOPES has consolidated its position as a cross-cutting programme of WHO, now based in the Vector Ecology and Management Unit of the Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, to support United Nations agencies and WHO programmes and to assist Member States in implementing vector control programmes safely and judiciously.

During the past 10 years, more than 40 pesticides have been evaluated for public health use, and more than 70 submissions for WHO specifications and quality standards for public health pesticides have been reviewed. WHOPES has also produced documentation and guidelines to support Member States in vector management. The testing and evaluation of insecticidetreated nets (ITNs) has been particularly important, providing a simple, practical, cost-effective weapon against malaria and other vector-borne diseases.

WHOPES has strengthened its collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to ensure complementary, harmonized, coordinated guidance and support to Member States and stakeholders in managing pesticides throughout their life-cycle.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The full message is available on the WHO website at:

http://www.who.int/whopes/WHOPES\_50\_anniversary\_DG\_speech.pdf.

The emergence and re-emergence of vector-borne diseases, which may be aggravated by climate change in many parts of the world, calls for greater attention to these conditions, which account for about 17% of the estimated global burden of communicable diseases. As pesticides are still the most important element in the integrated approach to vector control, greater vigilance and better management of insecticide resistance is necessary, particularly in the control of malaria and dengue, as the number of potential replacement insecticides is rapidly shrinking. In particular, the successes achieved with the use of pyrethroid-treated mosquito nets are in danger if alternative insecticides are not developed in the near future.

Even if safety is an important consideration in the recommended use of pesticides, inappropriate use may result in adverse acute or chronic effects on humans and the environment. Yet, a significant number of countries in tropical and subtropical regions of the world do not have adequate national regulatory frameworks or the human or financial capacity to regulate the availability, sale and judicious use of pesticides. Furthermore, the availability of substandard, illegal and counterfeit products is increasing in many countries, posing additional health risks and straining their limited regulatory and enforcement capacity.

In May 2010, the Sixty-third World Health Assembly recommended establishing or strengthening capacity to regulate pesticides, with strong commitment from WHO to work with all stakeholders on the sound management of these

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