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Report of the WHO Expert Committee, 2003
(including the 13 Model List of Essential Medicines)



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Geneva, 31 March–3 April 2003

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1. Introduction

The WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines met in Geneva from 31 March to 3 April 2003. The meeting was opened on behalf of the Director-General by Dr J.D. Quick, Director, Department of Essential Drugs and Medicines Policy, WHO, who expressed appreciation for the rapid dissemination during 2002 of the report of the previous meeting and the first edition of the *WHO model formulary* (1). In referring to the recent twenty-fifth anniversary of the essential medicines concept, Dr Quick stressed that despite widespread acceptance of the global relevance of the concept, many challenges still remain, especially with regard to ensuring equitable access to essential medicines.

The WHO Secretariat requested and received agreement from the Committee to hold an open session as part of its meeting (see section 2). The purpose of the open session is to allow all stakeholders to participate in the discussions and to comment on issues relating to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (the Model List). Furthermore, for Expert Committee members it provides an opportunity to receive, at first-hand, additional information and opinions on matters under consideration. Participants were assured that the discussions and considerations of the open session would be reflected in the report of the meeting. A summary of the Committee's meeting report would be submitted to the WHO Executive Board in January 2004, together with a statement on the public health implications of its recommendations.

The Committee decided to maintain the reporting format adopted at its previous meeting whereby the updated version of the Model List, including explanatory notes and supporting background information relating to the use and development of the Model List, is presented as an annex to the meeting report (Annex 1). Similarly, a list of items on the Model List ordered by their corresponding Anatomical

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