

WHA29.54 Smallpox eradication programme

The Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the Director-General's report on the smallpox eradication programme;

Noting with satisfaction that smallpox is now restricted to only a few remote villages of a single country and that interruption of smallpox transmission is believed to be imminent;

Bearing in mind the importance of completing the eradication of smallpox in the shortest possible period of time and of ensuring confidence in the achievement by using international groups of experts to confirm the eradication two years or more after the last known case;

Recognizing the need for all laboratories which retain stocks of variola virus to take maximum precautions to prevent accidental infection;

Appreciating the importance of continued surveillance and research to provide further assurance that there is no animal or other natural reservoir of the virus;

Noting that the risk of smallpox importations by persons travelling by sea or air has so diminished that no such importations have occurred during the past 17 months;

Noting also that, as supplies of vaccine now being produced are more than sufficient in quantity to meet all current needs, an accumulation by WHO of vaccine stocks for use in the event of an unforeseen emergency could be established;

1. CONGRATULATES the many countries which have made and are making such a successful and determined effort to eradicate smallpox;
2. EXTENDS special congratulations to the 15 countries of western Africa where smallpox eradication was certified on 15 April 1976 and to Bangladesh, India and Nepal, which interrupted smallpox transmission during the past year;
3. THANKS all governments, organizations and individuals who have contributed to the implementation of the programme and requests that they continue to contribute generously to the programme until global eradication can be certified;
4. ENDORSES the procedures developed by the Director-General in the use of groups of international experts in the certification of eradication and asks for the full cooperation of all countries concerned in carrying out

these procedures, so that countries throughout the world may have confidence that eradication has been achieved;

5. URGES that all governments continue to conduct surveillance for smallpox-like illnesses and to inform the Organization promptly should any such cases be discovered;

6. REQUESTS all governments and laboratories to cooperate fully in preparing an international registry of laboratories retaining stocks of variola virus but, at the same time, urges all laboratories which do not require such stocks of variola virus to destroy them;

7. URGES all governments to restrict their requests for International Certificates of Smallpox Vaccination to travellers who, within the preceding 14 days, have visited a smallpox-infected country as reflected in the WHO *Weekly Epidemiological Record*;

8. REQUESTS Member countries to continue to donate vaccine to the Voluntary Fund for Health Promotion so that a reserve supply of 4 million vials of vaccine (sufficient to vaccinate 200 to 300 million persons) may be accumulated which could be made available to Member countries in the event of unforeseen emergencies;

9. REQUESTS the Director-General to obtain expert advice, through the Committee on International Surveillance of Communicable Diseases or by other means, on questions such as the need for retention of variola virus in laboratories and, if necessary, to make recommendations on the number and distribution of such laboratories and on the precise precautions which should be taken to prevent accidental infection;

10. REQUESTS further the Director-General to undertake a study of the organization of a world conference on the problems of eradicated smallpox and to report on the subject to the Executive Board and to the Thirtieth World Health Assembly.