

Smallpox eradication: destruction of *Variola virus* stocks

The Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA52.10 on smallpox eradication;

Having considered the report on smallpox eradication;¹

Noting that the research programme will not be completed by the end of 2002,

1. DECIDES to authorize the further, temporary, retention of the existing stocks of live *Variola virus* at the current locations specified in resolution WHA52.10, for the purpose of enabling further international research, on the understanding that steps should be taken to ensure that all approved research would remain outcome-oriented and time-limited and periodically reviewed and a proposed new date for destruction should be set when the research accomplishments and outcomes allow consensus to be reached on the timing of destruction of *Variola virus* stocks;
2. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to continue the work of the Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research with respect to the research involving *Variola virus* stocks and to ensure that the research programme is conducted in an open and transparent manner;
 - (2) to ensure that regular biosafety inspection of the storage and research facilities is continued in order to confirm the strict containment of existing stocks and to ensure a safe research environment for work with *Variola virus*;
 - (3) to ensure that research results and the benefits of this research are made available to all Member States;
 - (4) to report annually the progress in the research programme and relevant issues to the World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board.

Ninth plenary meeting, 18 May 2002
A55/VR/9

¹ Document A55/21.