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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN  
INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT  
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON  
CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

REVIEW OF ONGOING INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE  
WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Information document on the action plan of the World Health  
Organization for the reduction of reliance on  
DDT use for public health purposes

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in the annex to the present note, information provided by the secretariat of the World Health Organization (WHO). The information is circulated as submitted by the secretariat of WHO and has not been formally edited.

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\* UNEP/POPS/INC.4/1.

## Annex

### **Information Document on the World Health Organization's Action Plan for the Reduction of Reliance on DDT Use for Public Health Purposes**

#### **WHO GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND MANDATE**

WHO has committed to taking a leadership role in assisting Member States to reduce reliance on DDT for public health purposes. World Health Assembly Resolution 50.13 (May 1997) calls on Member States to *reduce reliance on insecticides for the control of vector-borne diseases and ensure that the use of DDT is for public health purposes only*, and requests the WHO Director General to *participate in the INC for POPs and in other intergovernmental meetings related to the use of pesticides for vector control*.

In addition, the 20th meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on Malaria (October 1998) concluded that *restrictions on DDT for public health use contained in a future POPs Convention should be accompanied by technical and financial mechanisms to ensure that effective malaria control is maintained, at least at the same level, through vector control methods that depend less on pesticides in general, and on DDT in particular*.

WHO wants to draw the attention of environmental, health, and other sectors to the opportunities offered by current international efforts to reduce and/or eliminate pesticides defined as persistent organic pollutants, in terms of adjustment and strengthening of national vector control programmes, of resource mobilization for malaria control activities, and of re-enforcing the contribution of vector control to rolling back malaria.

WHO will actively collaborate with partners to ensure that action to reduce or eliminate the reliance on DDT for vector control is evidence-based and fully integrated into national planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts associated with malaria control and health sector development. Strong emphasis will be placed on country activities to roll back malaria in the context of wider health and human development efforts. Moreover, coordination with other agencies (e.g., UNEP, FAO, Basel Secretariat) will be critical to assure adequate mechanisms for addressing the diverse issues associated with DDT and malaria control.

#### **WHO ACTION PLAN**

WHO is committed to the implementation of an action plan and long-term strategy that supports its Member States in making informed decisions regarding the effects of a reduction and/or elimination of DDT, under a future POPs treaty, while ensuring that no adverse health consequences result from these actions.

The action plan involves three strategic principles: 1) involvement of all countries still

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using DDT for vector control, 2) early identification of funding mechanisms for alternatives, and 3) the need for advocacy. According to these principles, WHO will assist Member States to:

- a) conduct needs assessments to establish base-line data on current vector control programmes as the basis for national action plans to reduce reliance on DDT without adverse public health consequences;
- b) ensure the safe management of DDT stockpiles in collaboration with FAO and industry;
- c) support research on alternatives through institutional research networks;
- d) monitor and evaluate disease control programmes;
- e) mobilize resources to ensure that the necessary technical and financial support is available for strengthening disease control programmes.

WHO will operationalize the elements of the action plan through the development of a general workplan and involvement of headquarters, regional, and country-based staff. The workplan will guide actions at all levels and identify specific activities and corresponding budget needs for implementation.

## **KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

WHO emphasizes that international efforts to reduce reliance on DDT for vector control must take into consideration the continued role of DDT in combating malaria in the poorest endemic countries while also recognizing the eco-toxicological characteristics of DDT and its metabolites. The following issues will guide WHO in the implementation of its action plan and strategy to support Member States:

- 1) A reduction of reliance on DDT and/or restrictions on its use should result in strengthening malaria control programmes and not lead to an increase of the malaria burden.
- 2) Countries that use DDT for malaria vector control must establish and maintain a regulatory basis to ensure that DDT is used for public health purposes only. Countries will further need to strengthen capacity to monitor and enforce compliance with these regulations.
- 3) An exemption on DDT production and use limited to public health vector control must remain in the text of the POPs treaty. A mechanism to periodically review the need for an exemption should be incorporated into the treaty.
- 4) National action plans, based on assessment of the current epidemiological situation, disease control and health care infrastructure, are required to establish integrated strategies that enhance malaria control while reducing reliance on DDT.
- 5) Decisions to replace DDT with potential alternatives should be based on an assessment of the costs, effectiveness, feasibility, and environmental and health impacts of DDT and alternatives under local conditions.
- 6) Efforts are needed to support investments in research to develop new affordable, cost-effective, and sustainable vector control methods.
- 7) Proactive mobilization of resources with donor organizations is needed to ensure

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that the necessary technical and financial support is available to countries for the implementation of sustainable integrated, evidence based, and cost-effective vector control programmes that result in reducing the malaria burden.

- 8) Technical assistance and capacity building is needed for strengthening countries' abilities to manage integrated approaches to malaria vector control that rely on:
  - surveillance systems for epidemiological monitoring;
  - epidemic forecasting;
  - detection of insecticide resistance;
  - judicious use of chemicals;
  - application of alternative control methods.
- 9) Monitoring and management of insecticide resistance should be enhanced through coordination between the health and environmental sectors and implementation of resistance management strategies.
- 10) Inter-sectoral and regional collaboration should strengthen surveillance, research and planning activities and linkages should be established between health, environment, agriculture, and other sectors.

### **WORK UNDERTAKEN SINCE INC-3**

- The WHO Director General designated the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Project as the focal point for DDT and malaria issues within WHO.
- Establishment of the WHO-Wide Work Group on DDT to ensure involvement of regional offices and country consultations in the development of the WHO action plan and strategies concerning DDT.
- Development of a draft WHO-wide DDT workplan for the year 2000-2001. The workplan will be the basis for developing funding proposals and for guiding WHO-supported activities.
- Discussions with partner agencies and donor organizations to mobilize resources for assisting Member States to reduce reliance on DDT.
- Completion of a global inventory of insecticide use for malaria control for the past five years which will serve as a base-line for DDT use.
- Convening of the Regional Consultation for Preparing African Countries to Reduce Reliance on DDT for Malaria Control in Harare, Zimbabwe (8-10 February 2000).
- DDT briefing session for negotiators at the Fourth Intergovernmental Negotiation on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Presentation of information on WHO activities supporting country efforts to reduce reliance on DDT in addition to presentations of case-studies describing country specific experiences on the use of DDT and progress towards its reduction.

### **NEXT STEPS**

WHO is taking the challenge of reducing reliance on DDT and assuring protection of human health and the environment very seriously. WHO is working with countries to: a) improve the use and management of insecticides for vector control; b) evaluate and introduce chemical and non-chemical alternatives to DDT; and c) safeguard human health and the environment while decreasing the burden of malaria and other vector borne diseases. To successfully meet this challenge, WHO intends to broker financial

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resources for countries, provide technical support, and coordinate activities with an array of partners including UN Agencies, national governments, research institutions and non-governmental organizations.

***Resource Mobilization:***

While activities to mobilize resources are underway, support from donor organizations and existing funding mechanisms (e.g., Global Environment Facility) are urgently needed. Therefore, WHO will intensify its efforts to work with key partners in generating the additional resources required for countries to successfully reduce reliance on DDT.

***Technical Support and Capacity Building:***

Additional consultations with countries still relying on DDT will be supported. These consultations should assist Member States in defining their needs for reducing reliance on DDT, strengthen dialogue between the public health, environment, and agriculture sectors, and assist governments in the formulation of national action plans addressing the reduction and/or elimination of DDT. The development and dissemination of technical guidance documents and information to Member States (i.e., guidance on the judicious use of insecticides for malaria control; guidelines for documenting and evaluating biological, chemical, and environmental management strategies; tools for assessing the cost-effectiveness and feasibility of alternative strategies; procedures for monitoring insecticide resistance to vectors...) will remain an important component of WHO's assistance and capacity building activities.

***Research and Evaluation:***

Further emphasis will be placed on research for alternatives so that research priorities are coordinated and that alternative strategies are field tested. WHO will build on efforts to develop and strengthen technical capacity and national plans to implement and evaluate potential alternatives to DDT for malaria vector control.

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