

AFR/RC38/R2:

The Regional Committee,

Concerning that, despite progress made in the implementation of national expanded immunization programmes, deaths from neonatal tetanus still account for major part of overall mortality in the neonatal period;

Noting that the main factors that influence the incidence of neonatal tetanus are the immunization of women of childbearing age, especially pregnant women, with tetanus toxoid, and the quality of health care during the antenatal, delivery and neonatal periods;

Expressing its satisfaction that the World Health Organization, and many international, governmental and non-governmental organizations are ready to further promote measures to support countries in strengthening their immunization programmes to provide maximum coverage to the vulnerable populations;

Aware that such well-planned and coordinated actions and systematic immunization programmes are feasible in all the Member countries;

Recognizing that the strengthening of immunization strategies in order to reach all women of childbearing age will have an immediate impact on the incidence of neonatal tetanus, thereby making it possible to envisage its elimination;

Recognizing that such an objective will contribute significantly to child survival and the achievement of health for all by the year 2000;

1. URGES Member States to:
 - (i) take up the challenge to eliminate neonatal tetanus in the Region, prepare plans of action and take appropriate steps for the purpose;
 - (ii) adopt the goal of reducing the incidence of neonatal tetanus to less than one case per 1000 live births by 1991, and to zero by 1995, in countries where it is still endemic;
 - (iii) develop or maintain immunization and surveillance programmes for all the EPI target diseases, with special emphasis on neonatal tetanus;
2. REQUESTS United Nations agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that are at present contributing to neonatal tetanus control in Africa, such as UNICEF, Canadian Public Health Association, etc., to continue supporting the implementation of the neonatal tetanus elimination programme and the achievement of its objectives;
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director to:
 - (i) continue his efforts to mobilize resources to further strengthen neonatal tetanus control and ensure its elimination in the African Region by 1995;
 - (ii) evolve a strategy for neonatal tetanus elimination that can be implemented and maintained over a long period of time by the Member States,

bearing in mind in particular the tree-phase scenario of health development and the acceleration of health for all, focusing chiefly on the district level;

- (ii) present a report to the Regional Committee at its thirty-ninth session.

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