



FIFTY-SIXTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

WHA56.20

Agenda item 14.7

28 May 2003

Reducing global measles mortality

The Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly,

Alarmed by the unacceptable burden of nearly 800 000 measles deaths annually, occurring mostly in infants and young children living in developing countries;

Recognizing that the current disease burden of measles is the result of underutilization of measles vaccine caused by inadequately supported immunization programmes and disease surveillance systems;

Stressing the importance of achieving the goal adopted by the United Nations General Assembly special session on children (2002) to reduce deaths due to measles by half by 2005, compared with the 1999 level, and the target contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to reduce the under-five child mortality rate by two-thirds by the year 2015;

Recognizing the availability of safe, effective and inexpensive measles vaccines and proven strategies to reduce measles mortality;

Welcoming the remarkable progress that has been made by the Measles Initiative partnership to reduce measles deaths in Africa;

Noting the critical importance of routine immunization services as the foundation of a strategy to reduce measles deaths in a sustainable manner, and the essential role of integrated epidemiological and laboratory surveillance for measles in guiding control efforts;

Having considered the report on the strategy for child and adolescent health and development, which identifies measles as one of the five preventable communicable diseases that account for the vast majority of childhood deaths,

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to implement fully the WHO-UNICEF strategic plan for measles mortality reduction 2001-2005 in countries with high measles mortality within their national immunization programmes;

(2) to provide the financial support necessary for full implementation of national immunization programmes in which the strategy to reduce measles mortality is embedded, including measles vaccine for routine and supplementary immunization activities and strengthening of epidemiological and laboratory surveillance for measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases;

(3) to use the strategic approach of reducing global measles mortality as a tool for strengthening national immunization programmes, with special emphasis on improving access to immunization services, ensuring safe immunization practices, and enhancing human-resource capability, laboratory networks, epidemiological surveillance and cold-chain systems;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to work with Member States through regional offices to strengthen national immunization programmes and disease-surveillance systems, using the status of measles control as one of the leading indicators of progress in reducing child mortality;

(2) to strengthen partnerships at global, regional and subregional levels with UNICEF and other international bodies, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to mobilize the additional resources needed to implement fully the WHO-UNICEF strategy for the expanded programme on immunization and measles mortality-reduction strategies;

(3) to report to the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, on progress made in implementing this resolution.

Tenth plenary meeting, 28 May 2003
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