



The NGOs in Ouagadougou reaffirm their commitment for elimination as an objective

It won't be easy. Despite the challenges to take up, the Group of Coordination of the Non-Governmental Development (NGDOs) for onchocerciasis elimination, open to all the approaches, is strongly engaged in continuing its role of partners with the African Programme for onchocerciasis control (APOC) with the intent of doing better than before. By this commitment, the Chair, Dr Frank Richards, closed the two-day meeting on 9th March 2014 in Ouagadougou.

Before him, Dr Jean-Baptiste Roungou, Director of APOC had thanked the participants representing a dozen of organizations for taking into consideration all the questions in the agenda and for the serenity and transparency during the discussions.

The next meeting of the Group will take place in September 2014.



The Chair's point of view: Frank Richards, Chair, NGDO Coordination Group for Onchocerciasis Elimination : *"The commitment of NGDOs is firm."*

"The commitment of NGDOs to the acceleration of onchocerciasis and LF elimination is at once both firm in intent but flexible in approach. The onchocerciasis NGDO group changed its name last year

from the NGDO Coordination Group for Onchocerciasis Control to the NGDO Coordination Group for Onchocerciasis Elimination to demonstrate our combined commitment by our 13 members to the interruption of river blindness transmission once and for all, globally. Similarly, the onchocerciasis NGDO group is in discussion with the LF NGDO coordination group to find new ways to work more closely together in the linked effort to elimination both diseases as quickly as possible from Africa. We seek to work with the LF group as equal partners, and wish to promote an open approach by starting off with 'a clean sheet of paper' to define our partnership.



Similarly, we strongly believe that APOC's transition must take the same approach, showing the LF community that this joint effort must be undertaken with a spirit of an equal partnership, joining the best of both initiatives in a search for gaining optimal synergistic interactions.

The transition of APOC, similarly, means new ways of working together with the LF and broader NTD communities; with mutual respect in particular for the LF initiative's MDA and morbidity alleviation goals. .../2

We as NGDO partners in APOC seek in PENDA to see the creation of a new era of equal partnership between these two sister African programs with both utilize the same drug (Mectizan) and work often in the same districts. There is risk here; it remains to be seen if this new convergence will work. We as the oncho NGDO group will do our bests to seek solutions to the difficult challenges head on, in a spirit of cautious optimism». ♦

What caught their attention:



Dr Francisca O. Olamiju, Executive Director, MITOSATH, Nigeria :

"The new entity called by others PENDA, is generally receiving acceptance and partners are urging to achieve this. This will greatly encourage donors and government partners."



Dr Daniel Shungu, Vice-Chair, Executive Director, UFAR:

"The need to review and draw from the best practices of the oncho and LF groups for a potential merger of the two groups in the new entity area."

The lessons they learnt from the NGDOs meeting:



Dr Yaobi Zhang, Regional Coordinator, HKI, Dakar Senegal:

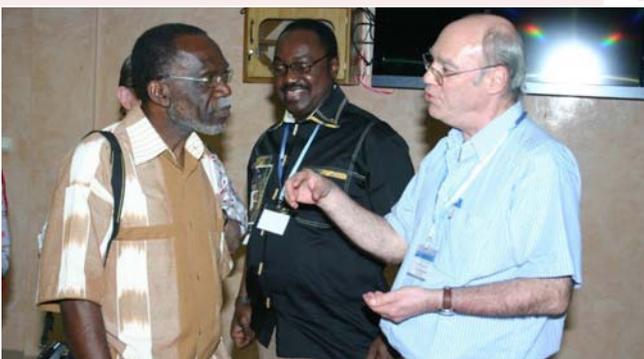
"The excellent organization of the meeting; Very opened and transparent discussions; an excellent transport provision."



Dr Adrian Hopkins, Director, MDP:

"The oncho and LF elimination Programs are exciting and challenging goals. But we need to scale up treatment before the end of APOC in 2015. How do we do this with reduced funding? If there is no increased funding we cannot succeed !"

Interviews reported by par TB



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