



SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MALARIA ERADICATION

ADDIS ABABA, 16 - 21 NOVEMBER 1959

EM/ME-Tech.2/47

18 November 1959
English Only

OBSERVATIONS ON GOVERNMENTAL FINANCIAL PROCEDURES
IN
COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

by

Dr. M.A. Farid
Senior Regional Malaria Adviser

This paper presents the difficulties and frustrations that exist if a Malaria Eradication Organization follows the same bureaucratic and routine financial procedures. No reference is made to any particular country, but it must be admitted that many countries of the Region more or less share these difficulties arising from the lack of financial authority invested in the Malaria Eradication Service. It shall be left to your judgment, after this presentation to decide whether such state of affairs can be tolerated in any Malaria Eradication Programme.

The following are the difficulties:-

1. Although a budget for malaria eradication is approved even by Parliament, yet this budget is not necessarily spent on malaria. As the Minister of Health is administering the whole budget of the Ministry of Health, he can appoint on the malaria budget certain posts not related to malaria, or meet emergencies like epidemics, or help another WHO-assisted project, to which no budget had been visualized in time.
2. About three months are wasted every year due to suspension of expenditures during a period prior to the termination of the fiscal year and until the issue of the new budget. **This very critical** period usually happens during the execution of the spraying programmes.
3. There are restrictions on petty cash expenditures, and on local purchases which take prolonged routine procedures.
4. The budget does not cover unforeseen emergency conditions as when the wages of temporary labourers have to be raised, due to local demands on labour force.
5. Purchases especially of insecticides, equipment and transport are subject to tender regulations which usually take time and result

in the choice of the cheapest offer irrespective of quality.

6. Importation of materials are sometimes hindered by the restrictions laid by the Ministry of Finance on foreign currency.

7. Restrictions on transference of balances of funds of certain items of expenditure to others, cause a lapse of a portion of the budget every year.

8. The Malaria Eradication Organization is not kept informed periodically during the year of the balance of the budgetary provision until very late during the year, when told they are in the red.

9. If another organization or board is providing the money, it follows its own accounting system, has its own accountants who demand pre-auditing and post-auditing of every item of expenditure and these entail enormous delays, especially when this accountant has diversified activities.

10. The remuneration of malaria personnel in relation to the hardships experienced in malaria work accelerates the shift-over, i.e. these trained workers go to other easier jobs with same salary or even less. In some countries the Malaria Eradication Programme is regarded as a temporary undertaking, and professional personnel are contracted with no guarantee for their future tenure in the Government Service.

11. There is an aptitude to cut down on the malaria budget, as Governments cannot conceive the importance of the consolidation phase and are reluctant to continue expenditures on a disappearing disease when other urgent problems are pressing.

These difficulties will be sure to urge us to recommend financial autonomy in Malaria Eradication Organizations, without which the successful issue of the programme can never be ensured.

Just to give the Conference an example as to the importance of this autonomy, the case in Egypt during the Gambiae Eradication Service can be referred to. For three years the Government following its routine bureaucratic procedures could not stop gambiae invasion and the explosive epidemics that were concomitant with it and that caused the regrettable loss of 200,000 lives. The Government decided afterwards to give complete financial and administrative autonomy to this Service. In eleven months gambiae was eradicated from the country. We wish to stress to the Governments that they should not learn their lesson from the drama which certainly will follow such state of affairs. They should have the foresight to avoid failure and delays, and ensure a successful issue of the malaria eradication programme.