



WHO INTER-REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON MALARIA ERADICATION  
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NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEES ON MALARIA ERADICATION  
PURPOSES, FUNCTIONS AND PRESENT STATUS \*

by

C. A. Alvarado, M.D.  
Director, Division of Malaria Eradication

A. Introduction

By essence, malaria eradication programmes are country-wide operations and as such they necessarily require the collatoration of the entire community, its representative groups, the governmental agencies and the non-governmental organizations. This wide participation of different kinds of agencies, degrees of participation and opportunities to collaborate must be appropriately marshalled to ensure that the nature, timing and location of such cooperation is co-ordinated into an effective combined effort. This is the rationale of the National Co-ordination Committees for malaria eradication. As countries are so diverse in their historical, political and administrative features, the set up for such co-ordination must be conditioned to the particular requirements of each individual country, but malaria eradication being a national enterprise, co-ordination must be assured first at the top national level. As the programme has different phases, each with somewhat different needs, co-ordination must be carefully adjusted to the changing conditions of the programme, but preceding its requirements.

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## B. Purpose and Authority

The main purpose and function of the National Co-ordination Committees are to develop co-ordination policy, to establish the concurrent responsibilities of the different agencies involved and to facilitate the execution of the different activities of the malaria eradication programme. Malaria eradication is a "composite" operation in which its constituents are closely interdependent; any failure in the development of one of them would certainly upset and handicap the general progress of the campaign. Co-ordination must therefore gather and ensure the support for the timely attainment of each intermediate objective.

Analysing the purposes mentioned above it can be seen that all of them are fundamental, but the enunciation of a co-ordination policy (which, in some cases, could require the endorsement of the top authority of each agency represented) is the corner stone of the functions of such Committees. As a consequence of such policy, the specification of duties and responsibilities of each cooperating agency will come out as a natural result, after which comes the study of the procedural details to implement such policy in order to facilitate the smooth and efficient execution of a tough, time-limited operation.

## C. Composition

As can be inferred from the introduction, a standard pattern cannot be laid down for the composition of the National Co-ordination Committees. The following comments show the wide range from where, according to the historical, political and administrative background of each country, the members of the Committee can be selected as representatives of the main agencies and groups involved.

Needless to say, the most outstanding members need to be the representatives of the Ministries more closely involved: public health, finance, education, defence, etc.; then, the representatives of some official agencies like the planning board or planning commission, the national insurance boards (such as the workers insurance agency), the agency for social and agricultural development, and finally, the non-governmental agencies and organizations like the Red Cross or Red Crescent, the Federation of Labour Unions, religious leaders, etc. This latter group could be considered as "associate members" to be convened only when appropriate. The national director of the malaria eradication programme must be considered a member "ex officio" and should act as secretary. Normally the multilateral and bilateral agencies assisting the programme have their representatives as "advisers" to the Committee. The highest authority on public health should be the chairman of the Committee.

D. Position

Countries with a federal organization will need to have a National Federal Co-ordination Committee and other Co-ordinating Committees at State or Provincial level which should consist of representatives of State or Provincial agencies. In such cases the National or Federal Committee would be mainly responsible for developing a high co-ordination policy and the State or Provincial Committees define the responsibilities and develop the procedural means to implement such policies.

In some countries a National Commission, Council or Board has been established as the top authority for the campaign, but such body's capability of co-ordination will depend for its effectiveness upon the origin and authority of its members, otherwise a separate Co-ordinating Committee should be appointed.

E. Other Considerations

The essential principle of co-ordination, based on well-known psychological factors, is that every participant contributing in the effort towards the eradication of malaria, must be fully aware of the methods employed, what is expected from him, at what time, by what means, and also receive credit for his participation.

According to the phases of the campaign some agencies would have to have a bigger share in their possible collaboration; for example, during the attack phase the army may provide transport, logistic experts and in some cases military support for operations in unsafe areas; in other cases the navy may provide transport to spray villages along the sea coast or on small scattered islands.

The Ministers of Agriculture and Public Work or the agencies in charge of socio-economic developments need to have the responsibility of duly reporting new agricultural settlements or concentration of labour for public or industrial work, in order to locate these new groups and include them in the normal spraying cycle or organize an emergency spray if the cycle has been completed already. Educational authorities may collaborate on briefing the students about the purpose and requirement of the campaign so that, in due course, they will brief their parents to ensure their cooperation, to avoid refusal or the deterioration of the sprayed surface.

During the consolidation phase the notification of malaria cases, the detection of fever cases and the radical treatment of the positive ones require the alertness and full-hearted participation of every member of the public health service and of the medical and paramedical professions as well as of others who can be enrolled for the same purpose.'

As the eradication programme successfully progresses and the hazard of malaria recedes, numerous new settlements may be observed in the previous malarious areas especially in those which were undeveloped due to the presence of malaria; this increase of population is apt to create problems and drawbacks if some undetected carrier comes in and, due to the lack of experience of the young community, no measures are taken to prevent its early detection and avoid an outbreak of new cases.

It is impossible to foresee in theory all the circumstances which may be present in any given case and in any given time. National Co-ordination Committees must, therefore, have the possibility of adapting themselves and their composition and responsibilities to such given circumstances, places and time and possess enough authority to deal with any problems of co-ordination and support as they may occur.