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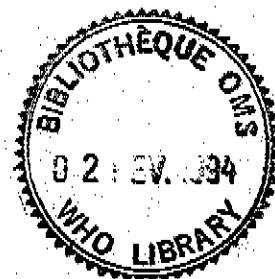
VACCINE SUPPLY TO THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

Summary Report on a WHO Consultation

Copenhagen, 29 April 1993

ABSTRACT

Representatives of the five Nordic countries reviewed action taken to date to ensure that supplies of EPI vaccines reach the Baltic countries. About US \$1.5 million worth of resources are expected to be made available by the Nordic countries in 1993/1994. With WHO coordination, and in some cases purchase and delivery of vaccines by UNICEF, it appears that essential EPI vaccines and the necessary syringes and needles will be provided up to the end of 1994 in quantities adequate to realize the schedule proposed at the first WHO Consultation on Vaccine Modernization in the Baltic Countries, Riga, October 1992. Advance planning should now begin to develop approaches that will assist the Baltic countries achieve self-reliance in vaccine supply. A follow-up meeting will be planned to begin joint discussions on possible ways to achieve this.



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TARGET 5
REDUCING COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

By the year 2000, there should be no indigenous cases of poliomyelitis, diphtheria, neonatal tetanus, measles, mumps and congenital rubella in the Region and there should be a sustained and continuing reduction in the incidence and adverse consequences of other communicable diseases, notably HIV infection.

Keywords

VACCINES
IMMUNIZATION

Introduction

The meeting was convened to follow up on the WHO Consultation on Vaccine Modernization in the Baltic Countries, held in Riga in October 1992. Representatives from the five Nordic countries, WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were invited.

The participants represented the main donors of vaccines to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in accordance with decisions taken at the Riga meeting. The present meeting reviewed the support offered by the Nordic countries to the Baltic countries in 1993, developed proposals for future assistance from the Nordic countries, and initiated discussion on strategies for the period 1994–1996.

Discussion

The discussion addressed five main topics.

1. *Review of the report on the Consultation on Vaccine Modernization in the Baltic Countries, Riga, 28–30 October 1992.*

The report was approved after minor corrections.

2. *Review of the support offered in 1993 by the Nordic countries for assistance with vaccine supplies and related needs in the Baltic countries.*

Support from the Nordic countries was reviewed in detail. In 1993 it comprised:

- collaboration between the State Serum Institute in Denmark and the Lithuanian and Latvian authorities in vaccine supply, vaccination programme development and training; the estimated value of this support was about six million Danish kroner for the period July 1993 to June 1994;
- the supply by Finland to Estonia of DPT and other vaccines worth 260 000 Finnish marks;
- a grant of US \$5000 by Iceland to Latvia to purchase vaccines through UNICEF, with an additional US \$8000 under consideration;
- a grant of 200 000 Norwegian kroner by Norway for vaccine support to the Baltic countries, to be used for vaccine purchase through UNICEF, with additional support under consideration; and
- an emergency donation of US \$15 000 by Sweden for vaccine purchase through UNICEF, and an additional grant of 2.2 million Swedish kroner for vaccine support to be used by the Regional Office under an agreement being implemented by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

3. *Discussion of approaches to coordinate the use of support in 1993 and 1994.*

It was decided that the support provided would cover only the basic vaccinations proposed at the Riga meeting (including measles-rubella vaccine, but not mumps), the necessary syringes and basic cold chain equipment. Technical assistance is offered in training and consultation. Used in accordance with these guidelines, the existing support from Nordic countries is sufficient to cover needs in 1993 and 1994.

4. *Discussion of the proposal for a "vaccine self-reliance" project*

It was agreed that a project requiring combined financing by donors and the Baltic countries during 1994–1996, and leading to full financing in hard currency by each Baltic country of its vaccination needs, should be planned. The Regional Office would prepare a provisional budget, and discussions with the Baltic countries to determine their level of interest would be undertaken before the proposal was circulated to the governments of the Nordic countries. It was felt appropriate that up to 10% of the donated funds be used for technical assistance – half for planning the self-reliance project and half for training in vaccine registration.

5. *Discussion of plans for a follow-up meeting by the cooperative group in the Baltics*

It was considered highly desirable that a follow-up meeting should take place, either in Tallinn or in Vilnius. In addition to following up the decisions of the Riga meeting, the agenda should address the prevention of diphtheria, the organization and monitoring of cold chains, and the "vaccine self-reliance" project.

There was also discussion on the role of the Regional Office's pharmaceuticals programme. For the time being it was felt that provision of vaccines and pharmaceuticals should not be combined, but information sharing was encouraged.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Voluntary donations and assistance by the Nordic countries meet the basic needs of the Baltic countries in 1993–1994. The assistance covers the basic childhood vaccines in quantities and variety to meet the EPI schedule proposed at the Riga meeting (including a two-dose schedule measles and rubella programme), the necessary syringes and needles, and basic technical assistance.

2. Detailed plans should be drawn up for making the Baltic countries fully independent in financing and purchasing vaccines. Continued assistance from the Nordic countries will still be needed in 1994-1996 in order to complete this "vaccine self-reliance" project.

3. A follow-up meeting of the cooperative group was proposed for autumn 1993.