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Your reference:

Professor Harutyun Kushkyan  
Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
Government Building No. 3  
0010 Yerevan  
Arménie

07 OCT 2011

Dear Professor Kushkyan,

### CERTIFICATION OF MALARIA ELIMINATION IN ARMENIA

I have the honour to inform you that based on the assessments of the malaria situation in Armenia by the World Health Organization (WHO) evaluation teams in February-March 2011, the subsequent WHO expert review, and the final recommendation from the chairman of the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on Malaria, WHO has decided to add Armenia to the list of countries where malaria elimination has been achieved.

The malaria-free status of Armenia will be published in the WHO *Weekly Epidemiological Record* and given notice during the Malaria Forum, hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on 17 October 2011 and the Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly in May 2012.

The confirmation of malaria elimination in Armenia refers to the situation at present and the likelihood that elimination can be maintained. Armenia will be expected to continue reporting on the maintenance of the malaria free status on an annual basis to the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO). In addition, in the event of local transmission of *P. falciparum* in Armenia, this must be reported immediately to EURO, so that necessary assistance can be provided and a travel alert be raised, should this be indicated.

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ENCL.: (1)

cc: The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other  
International Organizations at Geneva  
The WHO Head of Country Office, WHO Country Office, Yerevan

bcc: EURO

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Furthermore, I enclose as an annex the observations/recommendations of the members of the *WHO Expert Committee on Malaria* summarizing important comments concerning technical issues meriting your follow up in the context of the consultation for the certification of the malaria-free status of Armenia. It is felt that implementation of these recommendations will facilitate the maintenance of the malaria-free status. WHO will be ready for consultation on addressing the issues pertaining to these recommendations.

In light of the wealth of expertise on malaria elimination in Armenia, we look forward to continued technical cooperation with Armenia on this topic, including international training activities on malaria elimination.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Margaret Chan  
Director-General

**Certification of malaria elimination in Armenia**  
**Recommendations of members of the WHO Expert Committee on Malaria**

1. With regard to *An. maculipennis* and *An. sacharovi* prior knowledge on patterns of resistance could be useful. It would be useful to obtain these, at least for areas where the risk of local introduction is highest. The applied research programme mentions some molecular genetic studies on local vectors. These should include analysis for resistance markers, if possible to be supplemented by *in vitro* testing.
2. As the endemicity of malaria in areas neighbouring the Republic of Armenia is currently low, the risk of introduction from adjacent countries is small. However, as the Republic of Armenia is expanding its international links, the main threat is likely to come from either visitors from more distant, highly endemic areas, or from Armenians returning from such areas, moving into the realm of passive case detection.
3. If not already in place, blood banking regulations should include rules for deferral of blood donation and screening of donors based on travel history and risk of transmission, supported by negativity in a polyvalent antibody test.
4. Currently, no suitable antimalarial prophylactic drugs for travellers to malarious areas with *P. falciparum* risk are available in the Republic of Armenia. These should be made available through an appropriate service, responsible also for the follow-up of such travellers upon return.

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