



COMMUNIQUE OF THE 14TH MEETING OF
NATIONAL ONCHOCERCIASIS ELIMINATION COMMITTEE (NOEC)
HELD AT FRASER SUITES, ABUJA.
18TH TO 20TH MAY 2022

Preamble

The 14th meeting of the Nigeria Onchocerciasis Elimination Committee (NOEC) organized by Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) with the support of The Carter Center (TCC), was held at Frasier Suites Abuja, from the 18th to 20th May 2022. It was a hybrid meeting with provision made for participants to join in virtually.

A total of 47 persons were in attendance, out of which 7 persons were online. At the meeting were members of the NOEC, representatives of Amen Health Care and Empowerment Foundation (AHF), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM), U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health and Development Support Programme (HANDS),

The 14

th NOEC was Chaired by Prof. Ken Opara on behalf of Prof. B.E.B. Nwoke, who was absent on health grounds and sent his apologies. The meeting said a prayer wishing him quick recovery.

The meeting started with welcome remarks by the Director Public Health (DPH), of the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH). She welcomed all participants and appreciated all stakeholders for the continuous support in the fight against Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD). Goodwill messages were given by all the partners present. All reiterated their plans for continued support until onchocerciasis is eliminated in Nigeria.

As a form of self-appraisal, the Chair recognized commendable achievements by the committee that needs to be communicated to all stakeholders, despite challenges faced. The need for FMOH to regularly communicate to States and stakeholders the specific changes in elimination status, accomplishments and next steps where applicable was stressed.

Strategic and technical issues relating to elimination of onchocerciasis in Nigeria were presented and discussed. The following recommendations and resolutions were made:

A. Assessments and Reclassification Resolutions

1. Benue State's epidemiological evaluation results showed a sero-positivity of 0.63% from 3,184 children aged 5 – 9 years from 30 sites across the state. Additional 366

samples collected from a refugee camp and 1,353 samples from internally displaced persons camps showed 1.37% positivity from the refugee camp and 0% from the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. The survey however identified a point prevalence of >1% in 5 out of 30 sites.

3. FMOH is to communicate with partners implementing within the State where assessments are to be conducted to determine if there are funding gaps for the assessment.
4. It was recommended that the FMOH should from henceforth ensure that approval to conduct further evaluations be based on agreed plan and budget for sample analysis. Identified laboratories for

F. Other business

1. FMOH is advised to give priority in medicine allocation to hot spot areas requiring twice per year treatment such as the Edo-Ondo border.
2. The meeting noted the need to review the existing onchocerciasis elimination plan to address concerns and observations from the current guidelines for stopping MAM in 'LF only' endemic areas.

The 15th NOEC meeting has been scheduled for December 2022. The exact date will be shared later.