Toumodi, a crossroads city of Côte d’Ivoire, located at 198 km from Abidjan, hosted on October 15, 2014, the launching ceremony of the campaign of coordinated mass drug distribution for Onchocerciasis, Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis, and Geo-Helminthiases control.

This ceremony was graced by the presence of the Director of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) alongside the Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Côte d’Ivoire, representatives of Sightsavers, HKI, and administrative, customary, and religious authorities.

The representative of the Mayor of Toumodi after the "Akwaba" which means welcome in the Baoulé language transmitted the gratitude of the Mayor to all players and stakeholders involved in the Neglected Tropical Diseases control in Côte d’Ivoire in general and in the city of Toumodi in particular.

In his turn, Dr Jean Baptiste Roungou, Director of APOC expressed his deep gratitude to Madam Minister of Health and AIDS control for having associated him to this launching that he qualified as a "celebration of a historic event in Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) control in Côte d’Ivoire". At least 10 out of 18 million people at risk of Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis infection will receive the integrated mass treatment for both diseases in 2014.

This success, in his opinion, is the result of the commitment and responsibility of the government, the innovative and mobilizing partnership that made a difference in a context of scarcity of resources and many priorities; the consultation and dialogue between the stakeholders that have made it possible to agree on priorities and approaches to be implemented; and finally the pooling of resources of all the partners that has been crucial. He particularly welcomed the invaluable contributions of Merck & Co Inc; GSK, Sightsavers, HKI, CNTD, END FUND, DOLF and SCI for the effective implementation of the interventions. Finally, he urged the population, massively represented, to actively participate in this campaign and to be assiduous in future campaigns so that the objective of elimination should be reached in 2020 for lymphatic filariasis and 2025 for onchocerciasis.

In his opening speech, the Director General of Health, on behalf of the Minister of Health and AIDS control, expressed his gratitude to the Director of APOC and to the other technical and financial partners who have pooled their efforts to make this integrated mass distribution become a reality. He invited health officials at all levels to be strongly involved so that the distribution of drugs that are offered for free by pharmaceutical companies be successful.

The ceremony was completed by the administration of drugs to people present at the meeting.

Prior to this event, Dr Jean Baptiste Roungou met in turn the representatives of WHO, HKI, the national health programmes and the Director General of health, representing the Minister of Health and AIDS control. He thanked and commended everyone for the laudable efforts and the progress made which will help to restore Côte d’Ivoire its letters of nobility in the NTD control, if such progress is maintained.
Meeting with Oncho. & LF programme managers

Meeting with the Director General of Health, representing the MoH

Awaiting the launching ceremony at the residence of the prefect of Toumodi
TO MAKE THE CEREMONY BECOME A SUCCESS, THEY ALL MOBILIZED:

- Officials
- Customary authorities
- Religious authorities
- Partners
- Pupils
- Grannies despite their age were there
- The artists were not left behind
- Drugs timely delivered

Dr. J.B. Roungou, APOC Director, satisfied, expressed his gratitude to all.