Prospects of onchocerciasis and LF elimination
TCC has taken stock for appropriate guidance

The members of the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC) of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis control (APOC) have engaged in a dialogue in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, since 10 March 2014 as part of their 2014 first session, the 38th in its history. During four days, these experts in parasitology, entomology, epidemiology, social sciences, joined by academics and researchers, will rule on the current situation and the way in which the 2014-2015 transition should be conducted, prior to the launching in 2016 of a new entity for the elimination of onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis and for the support to the control / elimination of other chemotherapy preventive neglected tropical diseases.

Therefore, topics discussed are about the results recorded regarding the elimination of onchocerciasis in the past six months, the review of the questions contained in the resolutions of the 142nd and 143rd sessions of the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies (CSA), those of the 19th session of the Joint Action Forum (JAF), those of the coordination Group of non-governmental development organizations, not to mention those from the last TCC meeting held in September 2013 and budgetary matters. The technical reports of the Community directed treatment with ivermectin Projects (CDTI), old and new, are also reviewed in order to help countries move towards elimination.

So, the participants, in collaboration with the management team and the Programme Expert Advisors for thematic presentations and further explanation, have plenty of work ahead of them. At the opening session, Dr. Jean-Baptiste Roungou, APOC Director, who presented the eight priorities of the plan of action, urged the new members to avoid preconceived ideas and favor new and constructive contributions.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of a former colleague of the former Onchocerciasis Control Programme for West Africa (OCP), Dr Jean Mouchet, an emeritus entomologist died on 27 January in Auvergne, France. A brief tribute was paid to him by former students and colleagues attending the TCC session for his contribution to the momentum of Onchocerciasis control in Africa and for the commitment to OCP by France, his country.

Finally, Professor Mamoun Homeida, Chair of the TCC, said he was saddened by the announcement of Dr. Laurent Yaméogo’s retirement. The Coordinator of the APOC Director’s Office is retiring in June 2014, after more than 30 years of service in both Onchocerciasis control Programmes in Africa. ♦T.B