After a four-day work, the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC) of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) ended its 38th session on 13 March 2014 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, by reviewing the draft report of the meeting.

The Committee’s assessments of strategic and technical issues were of various types. They included: the need for all endemic countries to specify when and where ivermectin treatment should be stopped, the urgency for the introduction of a strict and transparent method of selecting projects eligible for alternative treatment and the suggestion of some indicators by the Committee to this end, the possibility of using the good results of entomological and epidemiological evaluations in advocacy and resource mobilization, the lack of equipment for the implementation of epidemiological evaluations that should be addressed by APOC in member countries.

With regard to budgetary matters, the Committee’s recommendations concurred with those of the last session of the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies, advocating the monitoring of budget consumption up to the mid-term review scheduled for June 2014; the adoption of strict steps such as suspending the transfer of funds against projects with late submission or failing to submit the financial reports. That is why the need to review the frequency of establishing the direct financial cooperation (DFC) was emphasized.

Dr Jean-Baptiste Roungou, Director of APOC, also expressed his gratitude for the entire work done by the participants. Finally, Professor Mamoun Homeida, Chair of the session, thanked the members and advisors for their active participation in the discussions and APOC Management for their expert advisors’ presentations that led to useful decisions. He also expressed his gratitude to the interpreters for their time and hard work. ♦

Summary by Ida Savadogo and Thérèse Belobo
When the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC) opens its next meeting in September 2014, the Coordinator of the APOC Director’s Office (COORD) will not be sitting in the conference hall next to the Chair of the session and the Programme Director. After working for more than thirty years for onchocerciasis control, Dr. Laurent Yaméogo will retire in June 2014, unfortunately at a time when a major shift is being made in the fight against NTDs.

To this end, TCC paid him a vibrant tribute in a brief ceremony that followed the second day’s session of the 38th meeting. Just as in a litany and speaking on behalf of all the participants, Dr Bernard Philippon slowly enumerated the human and professional qualities matured and appreciated since the time when this young and frail hydrobiologist, later on converted to entomology, joined the team of the Onchocerciasis Control Programme for West Africa (OCP). According to him, Dr Yaméogo was appreciated for his rigor, honesty, analytical mind, perseverance, constant availability, commitment, love of work well done, sense of listening, sense of proportion, and his wisdom.

And since "behind every great man is a great woman", this ceremony was also an opportunity for the Committee to acknowledge the support of Alice Yaméogo, his wife who, «despite the numerous absences and complicated work schedules of her other half, has been able to cope with loneliness. »

COORD, in turn, expressed his gratitude to all the participants and wished that "the Almighty God continue to guide the work of [his] colleagues after the steps taken, because the hardest is yet to come." In response, Mrs Yaméogo simply said "Thank you!". ♦ T.B.