List of participating Members, Observers and Secretariat is attached (Annex 1).

Welcome and messages from the Director-General (Dr Margaret Chan), Deputy Director-General (Dr Anarfi Asamoah-Baah) and Assistant Director-General (Dr Hiro Nakatani) were communicated by Dr Lorenzo Savioli (Director, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases).

Adoption of the Agenda and declarations of Conflicts of Interest
The Agenda (Annex 2) was adopted. Members of STAG-NTD are reminded to submit forms for declaration of Conflicts of Interest to the Secretariat.

Presentations and discussion
Presentations were issued in the form of a CD before the closure of the meeting.

1. Report from the Director of WHO/NTD

The achievements of the Department and the challenges faced in its drive to prevent and control illness due to the diverse assemblage of NTDs (PCT and IDM) were reviewed (Annex 3). Advances have been secured in treatment, advocacy, social mobilization, drug procurement, technical advice and the strengthening of partnerships, especially with donors and the pharmaceutical industry. The STAG congratulated and thanked the Director and Staff for their leadership in the improvement of health systems for the benefit of poor people.

2. Reports from the WHO regions

Regional representatives gave comprehensive accounts of priorities, policies and implementation issues concerning NTDs in their regions. The following themes emerged from the presentations and discussion:

- NTD planning is not fully “integrated” in some African countries.
- The NTD “brand” may weaken the disease-specific expertise that NTD control requires in countries.
- Leprosy elimination as a public health problem is attainable.
- In some places, visceral leishmaniasis is a growing problem.
- Cross-border collaboration between countries is needed to combat NTDs.
• Partners should be encouraged to support more capacity building in countries through research and training.
• Countries need to have greater ownership of NTD control.
• How might climate change affect NTDs?

The STAG noted that an official representative from AFRO had not attended the meeting, an absence of some concern since NTDs affect the health of so many Africans.


At the NTD Stakeholders’ Meeting, Washington DC, October 2008, WHO/NTD undertook to establish, through STAG-NTD, two Working Groups. One to prepare guidance and develop processes for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and one to coordinate and advise on drug quality, procurement and supply. Preparatory work was carried out at the Thematic Group Meetings. The STAG agreed to accept proposals for the establishment of the Working Groups (see Recommendations) noting the following points:

• Electronic data capture (including web-based entry) and analysis should be adopted as soon as possible for M&E to facilitate effective policy formulation, resource allocation and management of NTD control (see also section 4.1).
• The Drug Group should be sensitive to commercial interests, prequalification practice and regulatory practice.
• Full participation of countries is essential if the Working Groups are to meet country needs.
• Financial support will be needed to underpin the activities of the Groups and the expenses of the members.

The STAG decided that the remit of each Working Group should be determined before individuals were appointed to serve. Although the WHO Secretariat is better placed to decide, the STAG felt that the M&E Group should include expertise on country needs, health economics, clinical aspects, quantitative nutritional assessment, vector control, integration, laboratory capability and specific diseases. The Drug Group should include expertise on pharmaceutical production, regulatory matters, clinical pharmacology, procurement, prequalification and country needs. WHO Staff already cover some of the perceived Drug Group requirements.

4. Technical and operational issues

4.1 WHO/NTD Data Base. The stage of development of this important tool for NTD prevention and control was presented. The Department’s Data Manager was congratulated for his work. Attention is drawn to the following points:

• The facility should be extended to cover all NTDs in endemic countries.
• Partners should be encouraged to use and contribute to the data base.
• Examples of best practice should be added to the data base.
• Country files should be included and links be developed.
• Relevant literature citations should be included and updated.
• Care should be taken to maintain the quality of data fields.
The STAG urges all partners engaged in NTD work to adopt this freely available data base (Global Health Systems: NTD Data Base) as the universal source of information. Through links, countries can add data without loss of ownership. Planning to secure funding should begin as soon as possible since management costs will increase as the database and its use expand.

4.2 Drug Efficacy. After the WHO-World Bank Meeting on Drug Efficacy (Washington DC, 2007), groups were arranged to investigate (1) benzimidazole use, (2) ivermectin use, (3) praziquantel use, and (4) pharmacology of anthelmintic drugs for public health use. This initiative is focused on PCT, but needs to be expanded to cover drugs needed for the intensified disease management of human African trypanosomiasis (HAT), Chagas disease, visceral leishmaniasis, yaws and other diseases. Patients given medicine for HAT are experiencing relapses. The STAG concluded that a third Working Group (see section 3) should be established to deal with drug efficacy and resistance for both PCT and IDM. More research could be directed to increasing drug options for NTD control.

4.3 Integrated control of Neglected Zoonotic Diseases (NZDs). Humans share many diseases with their livestock. The STAG noted that expertise for these zoonotic diseases has been incorporated into WHO/NTD and, although progress may be slow, strategies to bring these diseases under control are expected to be developed and promoted.

5. Format of future STAG Meetings

Members agreed that for future meetings: (1) presentations should not include more than 15 slides; (2) that the final slide should take the form of questions to stimulate discussion; (3) that generic rather than specific topics should be addressed whenever possible.

6. Recommendations to WHO

Dr Hiro Nakatani, ADG/HTM, joined the meeting and reminded members that NTDs were now part of the G8 agenda, that Guinea worm disease (NTD) is on the verge of elimination, and that new commitments were forthcoming for NTDs despite difficult economic conditions. He approved the following proposed recommendations from the STAG to WHO (not in order of priority):

1. Two Working Groups (M&E; Drug needs – see the Thematic Meetings held in March) should be established with appropriate expertise and adequate financial support. Dr Sam Zaramba has agreed to serve as Chair of the M&E Group and Professor Nilanthi de Silva has agreed to serve as Chair of the Drug Group. These colleagues are nominees from the STAG.

2. Another Working Group to deal with Drug Efficacy and Drug Resistance should be established with appropriate expertise and financial support, based on the model of the Groups recommended above.

3. Strong support should be given to further the development of the WHO/NTD data base (Global Health Systems: NTD Data Base) as the universal system for sustaining NTD prevention and control.
4. NZDs should be recognized as a major component of human health and that collaboration should be encouraged between WHO/NTD and concerned organizations such as FAO.

5. Disease-specific expertise and vector control should be retained through training opportunities at institutions in Europe, USA and elsewhere.

6. Economic investigations into the cost benefit of NTD control need to be developed.

7. NTD expertise is needed in each WHO Regional Office.

8. The diversity of infectious agents among NTDs/NZDs is a strength that, if well managed, can lead to the cross fertilization of ideas about health care and the development of health care systems.
ANNEX 1

Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Neglected Tropical Diseases (STAG)
Salle A, WHO, Geneva
16 to 17 April 2009

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# Agenda

**Thursday 16 April 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Purpose of the session, target outcomes and questions for the STAG</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</table>
| 9:00  | **Welcome and introduction**  
Director, NTD and Chair STAG                                                | Introduction of new members                                                             | 20 mins  |
| 9:15  | **Report from NTD Director on status, progress and achievements with NTD control**  
Presentation Dr L. Savioli, WHO 30 mins  
Discussion: 30 mins | For information and discussion                                                          | 1 hour   |
| 10:15 | **Coffee/tea break**                                                     |                                                                                         |          |
| 10:30 | **Priorities and major policy and implementation issues**  
Americas - Dr S. Ault  
Africa - Dr S. Zaramba  
East Mediterranean - Dr B. Sadrizadeh  
Europe - Dr P. Ambroise-Thomas  
South East Asia - Prof. D. Fernando  
Western Pacific - Dr J. Ehrenberg | For information, discussion and recommendation                                           | 2 hours  |
| 12:30 | **Lunch break**                                                          |                                                                                         | 1 hr 30 mins |
| 14:00 | **Working Group on monitoring and evaluation**  
Report of the first adhoc meeting by Chair  
Proposal to the STAG | For information, discussion                                                             | 1 hr 30 mins |
| 15:30 | **Coffee/tea break**                                                     |                                                                                         | 30 mins  |
| 16:00 | **Working Group on NTD medicines**  
Report of the first adhoc meeting by Chair  
Proposal to the STAG | For information, discussion                                                             | 1 h30 mins |
| 17:30 | **Cocktail**                                                             | **WHO - French Restaurant**                                                             |          |
Friday 17 April 2009

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Purpose of the session, target outcomes and questions for the STAG</th>
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<td>9:00</td>
<td><strong>Technical and operational issues</strong></td>
<td>For information and recommendation</td>
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<td>1. Update on drug efficacy:</td>
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<td>PCT - Dr D. Engels</td>
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<td>IDM - Dr J. Jannin</td>
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<td>2. Integrated Control of NZDs: a route to poverty alleviation - Dr F. Meslin</td>
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<td>3. Update on Economic Analysis:</td>
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<td>Dr D. Shepard</td>
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<td>4. Global database for preventive chemotherapy - Mr A. Mikhailov</td>
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<td>10:30</td>
<td><strong>Coffee/tea break</strong></td>
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<td>11:00</td>
<td><strong>Recommendations on terms of reference and composition of the Working Groups</strong></td>
<td>Discussion and recommendations</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
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<td>NTD medicines</td>
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<td>12:30</td>
<td><strong>Lunch break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td><strong>STAG Membership</strong></td>
<td>STAG members only</td>
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<td>Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td><strong>Conclusions and recommendations</strong></td>
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<td>15:30</td>
<td><strong>Coffee/tea break</strong></td>
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<td>16:00</td>
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