

## 7. Actions in Areas of Common Epidemiological Interest

The participants of Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela discussed the situation in the areas of common epidemiological interest. They informed that the representatives of these countries intended to participate in a meeting regarding the evaluation of the malaria control programs of the nine states of the Amazonian Region of Brazil. Originally, the evaluation meeting was to be convened in September, 2000 in Macapá (State of Amapá, Brazil) but later the venue was to be Manaus (State of Amazonas).

Brazil suggested that as a part of the evaluation meeting, the representatives of the states bordering the four neighboring countries could also participate. It was also suggested that the representatives of the countries could work with local workers in order to further discuss the operational plans. This meeting will be a good opportunity to share information and ideas about the problems in the areas of common epidemiological interest and to establish agreements on common strategies to tackle these problems. The sharing of information and the rational use of materials and resources to develop and execute joint actions are seen as a very important tool to cope with the problem. Representatives from Suriname and Guyana have informed that there are many Brazilian gold miners working in forested areas where there are almost no health services.

The Malaria Control Program in Guyana and in the Brazilian State of Roraima are working together to provide health care to people from both countries in the area of common epidemiological interest, Bonfim in Brazil and Lethem in Guyana.

In French Guiana, 20 to 25% of all annual cases occur in the region of Oyapock River (*Oyapoque* to the Brazilians), an area bordering the Brazilian State of Amapá. Coordination is necessary among the health services of this region where the resources for the diagnosis and treatment of malaria are very scarce.

Comparing the first semester of 2000 with the first semester of last year it was possible to observe an increase of 150% in the incidence of malaria in the Amapá State of Brazil. Various efforts are being done in order to reverse this trend. These efforts include coordination between the National Health Foundation and the Indigenous Population Health Program.

Venezuela shares areas of common epidemiological interest with Brazil and Guyana and will also be a part of the meeting in Amapá, September 2000. It is said that the participation of the French Guiana is difficult but it is expected that representatives of the other countries will be present as will a PAHO officer who functions as a liaison with the French Government.

Other meetings which focused on coordinating efforts in areas of common epidemiological interest are as follows: (a) Colombia and Venezuela, September 7 in Puerto Ayacucho (Venezuela); (b) Peru, Bolivia and Brazil in Cobija (Bolivia); (c) Colombia and Ecuador, in October. (d) There are already frequent meetings between

Peru and Ecuador in the areas of common epidemiological interest. From 10 to 12 August, 2000 a meeting was held in Tumbes, Peru, where an agreement related to joint actions was adopted. Recently Ecuador and Peru formulated a project of Technical Cooperation with focus in the areas of common epidemiological interest.

It was agreed that within the scope of the Amazonian Treaty, after the above meetings have taken place with the support of PWR's in the countries, it may be possible to meet again and discuss the joint actions as a whole in areas of common epidemiological interest. The original idea was to have this meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in November 2000.