

8. The Guianese Shield

The participants from Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela had three meetings to discuss the situation in their areas of common epidemiological interest.

The five countries, referred to as the Guianese Shield (GS), are very different in size and population and have five different languages, but they share a number of commonalities and problems on which the strategy for a technical co-operation project should focus:

- All ratified the Amazonian Co-Operation Treaty
- Similar lack of Health Services Coverage in shield area
- Similar malaria species (*P. falciparum*)
- Similar vector (*A. darlingi*)
- The API in Guianese Shield area is the highest for the Region
- Indigenous people highest risk group
- Similar diversity in ethnic groups
- Population demographics are dispersed and very mobile
- Similar ecosystems and difficult access to these areas
- Similar economic activities (artesan gold mining, detrimental to workers health, public health and the environment)

The representatives of these countries agreed to participate in Manaus (originally it was Macapá) in a meeting with malaria control programs at the national level and from the borders states of Brazil (local personnel). This meeting was held on 21 and 22 September.

The areas of common epidemiological interest were discussed as was how joint strategies can be arranged to approach the malaria problem through information-sharing and the rational use of resources on behalf of the countries with the objective of carrying out simultaneous activities in these areas. The representatives of Suriname and Guyana informed that there are many gold miners (*garimpeiros*) from Brazil working in the forested areas where there are no health services.

The Guyana Program and the Program of Brazil's State of Roraima are taking care of the people living in the area of common epidemiological interest of both countries, Bonfim in Brazil and Lethem in Guyana.

In French Guiana, about 20-25% of all annual cases of malaria occur in the region of the Oyapock River, which borders the State of Amapá (Brazil). It is necessary to establish coordination between the health services of this region where there is no access to diagnosis and treatment of malaria.

It was anticipated that it would be difficult to have a representative from French Guiana attend the September meeting but the participation of official delegations of the other three countries (Suriname, Venezuela and Guyana) was expected as was the PAHO official who functions as a liaison with the French Government.