Reviewer's report

Title: Prevention, control, and elimination of neglected diseases in the Americas: Pathways to integrated, inter-programmatic, inter-sectoral action for health and development

Version: 2 Date: 2 November 2006

Reviewer: Juerg Utzinger

Reviewer's report:

General

First and foremost: As with my initial review, I kindly ask both the authors and the editors of BMC Public Health to accept my apology for sending in this re-review several days behind schedule. I was swamped with a host of other manuscripts to be refereed and a few other issues.

Second: I enjoyed re-examining this revised manuscript and I commend the authors for an excellent job done! Although the manuscript is still very long (I guess some 8,000 words or so) and could easily be split into at least two full manuscripts, I am satisfied with how the authors have addressed my previous points and sharpened some of the key issues discussed. I am particularly pleased with the incorporation and interpretation of a considerable body of additional, recent and highly relevant references. Thus, I feel that the overall quality of the paper has further improved. In fact, I feel that this manuscript now makes a most valuable addition to the growing literature on neglected (tropical) diseases, as it discusses pathways not only for their control, but particularly how an integrated, inter-programmatic and inter-sectoral approach will improve people’s health and well-being, and hence will contribute to sustainable development. It is particularly useful that the various issues discussed are supported with concrete examples. The above said, I would be more than happy to see this manuscript published in the near future in BMC Public Health. In my view, the paper is ready to move ahead, subject to a few minor issues that I offer under the category “discretionary revisions”.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

(1) The authors should check one more time about the consistent use of UK or US English. It appears that US English is used throughout (with the exception of “programmatic”), so this is an editor’s choice to move things forward or to have things changed to UK English. Would entails “anemia” (“anaemia”), “behavior” (“behaviour”), “diarrhea” (“diarrhoea”), “fecal” (“faecal”), “labor” (“labour”), “program” (“programme”), “sociocultural” (“socio-cultural”), “socioeconomic” (“socio-economic”), “toward” (“towards”), “wellbeing” (“well-being”).

(2) I could not always figure out why some terms are capitalized. For example, is there a need to capitalize the heading of a box? When several bullet points are given, is there a need to capitalize the first term? My suggestion: check the entire document one more time for capitalization.

(3) Page 4, Box: I suggest that these poverty statistics are presented in descending order, as follows. First bullet point: Almost 3 billion people are estimated to live on less than US$ 2 per day, and 1.2 billion live on less than US$ 1 per day, etc. Second bullet point: 2.4 billion people lack basic sanitation. Third bullet point: 2 billion are without electricity. Etc. My proposal would require to double check the sequence of the first 8 references.

(4) Page 5, paragraph 1: on 25 August 2006 SCIENCE published a news focus on “Water”. The authors
might wish to cite one or the other papers published in this special issue of SCIENCE to further underscore
the current/future issue of water scarcity and the links to conflict.
(5) Page 5, paragraph 4, line 4: Replace “soil-transmitted helminths” with “soil-transmitted helminthiasis”
(check the entire document on this issue, e.g., page 8, paragraph 5; page 9, paragraph 5, etc.).
(6) Page 6, paragraph 3 and box: “MDG #1” or “MDG-1” [check for internal consistency].
(7) Page 7, last paragraph: Perhaps the term “vertical” versus “horizontal approach” could be mentioned as
well.
(8) Page 10, paragraph 5: Should “Parasitic Diseases” read “Neglected Diseases” (or “ND” in short)?
(9) Page 13, paragraph 2: This paragraph is now very well developed and I appreciate the additional
references cited. In the next paragraph, the authors could perhaps also mention the issue of “health impact
assessment (HIA)”, and offer some thoughts who and why this could/should be institutionalized.
(10) Page 18, last line: Besides the “health facilities” the “education sector” could also be mentioned in this
context, as recent research has shown teachers are able to regularly administer anthelmintic drugs after
some minimal training.
(11) Page 22, paragraph 1: The term “non-governmental organization” has been abbreviated before; just
use “NGO”.
(12) Page 24, paragraph 5: See my specific comment 4; perhaps cross-reference to recent publications in
SCIENCE might be indicated here.
(13) Page 26, paragraph 2: Replace “T. solium” with “Taenia solium” (full name upon first use).
(14) Page 26, paragraph 4: This revised paragraph, including literature cited, is now excellent!
(15) Page 31, last line: Replace “JH” with “JCH”.
(16) Pages 32-40: Check all references once again, e.g. journal names in full or abbreviated?
(17) Page 34, Ref. 20: In the meantime, this paper has been published; please provide volume and page
numbers.
(18) Page 34, Ref. 28: Check journal abbreviation.
(19) Page 35, Ref. 42: Provide volume and page numbers.
(20) Page 36, Ref. 52: This paper has been published in the “Lancet Infectious Diseases”.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.