Introduction

To reduce reliance on chemicals and slow down build up of vector resistance, repeated efforts have been made in the WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR), to introduce less harmful or non-chemical vector control methods such as environmental control, eg.removal of breeding sites, use of impregnated mosquito nets and biological control interventions with larvivorous fish and bacillus thurengensis. The success of these alternative initiatives has been partially limited because most vector control programmes have been implemented in a more top-down manner, restricting effective and sustained community participation.

This state of affairs has been widely recognized, and led WHO to develop in 2004, a new Integrated Vector Management (IVM) strategy as a multisectoral participatory approach.

The need to further develop IVM was also highlighted at previous SEARO workshops organized by WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO), such as the one in Chiang Mai, Thailand in November 2003 to finalize the WHO Guidelines on the Management of Public Health Pesticides, and the joint WHO/UNEP workshop on the Stockholm Convention and Related Activities" held in April 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Following the issuance of WHO's new IVM strategy to manage all disease vectors, SEARO prepared a first version of the "*Regional Framework for an Integrated Vector Management Strategy for SEAR*". The "*Revised Malaria Control Strategy in SEAR 2006-2010*" to which IVM is a key element," was endorsed at the Health Ministers Meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in August 2006.

Stronger and more active community participation is called for to ensure increased success in preventing and controlling vector-borne diseases. The IVM approach aims at integrating the domains of environmental management and adult education. Community members could learn to improve their knowledge and their intuitive abilities to make joint, sound decisions on vector management. Successful regional experiences in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) schemes can be a source of inspiration for IVM implementation.

Such an initiative (IPVM pilot project) in Sri Lanka has been implemented since 2003, using the synergies between IPM and IVM. The experience of farming communities in irrigation systems of the Mahaweli Authority that are affected by mosquito-transmitted diseases associated with wetland rice and irrigation canals should be shared at the regional level.

With this background in mind, a regional workshop was organized by the Vector Control Research Centre VCRC, Puducherry Tamil Nadu, India, to obtain consensus from SEAR countries to implement a regional strategy for community-based, integrated vector management (IVM) using participatory approaches.

The present report gives an overview of the results obtained, mainly in the form of conclusions and recommendations. The report also includes a follow-up plan of action and important annexes concerning policy, capacity building and selection of IVM pilot projects in the Region.