



30 January 2020
**WORLD
NTD
DAY**
NEGLECTED
TROPICAL
DISEASES



About Neglected Tropical Diseases

What are NTDs?

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) encompass 20 bacterial, parasitic and viral diseases, plus snakebite, that prevail in tropical and subtropical conditions and affect mostly poor and marginalized populations.

More than **1.6 billion people** worldwide are still at risk of NTDs. **Over 500,000 people** die annually from the consequences of NTDs and millions **suffer a tripartite effect** of physical pain including long-term deformities and disabilities, social stigmatization and marginalization resulting in emotional pain, and economic burden often creating poverty traps. These group of diseases are a public health problem for **poor populations** living in tropical environments and difficult-to-access areas. Confirming their neglected status, only **0.6%** of global healthcare funding goes to controlling NTDs.

Burden in Africa

- A total of 47 countries in Africa are endemic to at least one NTD.
- About 79% of these countries are co-endemic for at least 5 of these diseases.
- Over 620 million people on the continent are infected with NTDs and this accounts for 40% of global NTD burden.
- NTDs heavily impact the health and well-being of women and girls in their most productive years.
- Communities inhabiting rural areas, urban slums and conflict zones are the most severely impacted.

Milestones in the fight against NTDs

Over the years, the international community and nation state have implemented varying strategies to control and eliminate NTDs.

Since 2012, 31 countries have eliminated at least one NTD. In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that more than one billion people were in the fourth successive year, treated for at least one of the five preventative chemotherapy NTDs (lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis and trachoma). While progress has been achieved since the first roadmap was published in 2012, most of the targets for 2020 have not been met.

So far, a few countries in Sub-Sahara Africa have eliminated some NTDs as public health concerns:

- Ghana is the latest country in Africa to have achieved elimination of trachoma as a public health problem in 2018, joining Morocco, which was validated in 2016.
- Togo and Egypt have been validated by WHO as having eliminated elephantiasis as a public health problem in 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- Kenya was validated by WHO in 2018 for the elimination of Guinea worm disease, joining Cote D'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria and Ghana. Ethiopia has also not reported new human cases since December 2017, putting the country on the path towards elimination.

"I urge my fellow African leaders to build on the progress already made and increase their efforts to tackle NTDs to make them a subject for much concerted effort and action at the African Union."

Hailemariam Desalegn
Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia



"We cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without addressing the needs of the poorest members of our society who are disproportionately affected by neglected tropical diseases"

- His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo,
President of Ghana



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Way Forward

As the current roadmap ends this year, the new roadmap for 2021–2030 focuses on integrated approaches and cross-sectoral collaboration to accelerate efforts against NTDs and makes a strong case for new diagnostics

and tools for effective implementation of NTD programmes. To achieve this, the complex interplay of factors and settings in which these diseases occur, including their ecological, social, cultural, economic and demographic conditions, must be thoroughly understood.

In May 2018, three interconnected strategic priorities were adopted through the 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13) of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all ages. In the GPW13, Member States set a target of eliminating at least one Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) in 30 additional countries by 2023. This presents Sub-Saharan African countries with an opportunity to advance the course of delivering universal health coverage for the poorest members of society. Support from international organizations including donations from pharmaceutical companies are still urgently needed in the action against NTDs.

To achieve elimination of NTDs, we encourage Ghanaian and other African leaders to:



Advocate and speak for their citizens who are afflicted with these diseases. By making their voices heard they draw the attention of international organizations and pharmaceutical companies to leave no one behind in the efforts against NTDs.



Prioritise the control and elimination of NTDs in their country. Clear, specific, achievable and measurable targets should be prioritised within development plans, in support of SDG 3.3 on health and 3.8 on universal health coverage



Mobilize and allocate the needed domestic resources to reach those that are left behind and use existing donor funding with greater efficiency in program implementation.



Establish a robust and regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the progress of adopted strategies in the fight against NTDs.



Recognise and celebrate countries as they achieve elimination goals and develop best practices approaches from their success.

Call to the African Union

The goal of the Africa Health Strategy (AHS) 2016–2030 is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all in Africa, in the context of “Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want” and the SDGs. We echo the call made by the organization “Uniting to Combat NTDs” in stating that there is the need for the establishment of a NTD Task Force at the African Union. This task force will facilitate knowledge-sharing across the continent, while ensuring that drug commitments from pharmaceutical companies are fully utilised every year and that global elimination targets are met.

Increasing investments in health, setting a specific target for Africa towards WHO’s goal of eliminating at least one NTD in 30 countries, committing African Union member states to provide domestic health financing towards their NTD programmes, and recognizing and celebrating countries as they achieve elimination goals are priority towards the achievement of the Africa Health Strategy (AHS).

The African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases

The African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Disease’s (ARNTD) comprises NTD researchers, policy makers and implementers, including clinicians focused on NTDs in Africa. The Network was formed in 2013 to support evidence-based control and elimination of NTDs from Africa by empowering current and future generations of African researchers to create an African continent free of NTDs.

The ARNTD maintains a lean Executive Secretariat hosted by the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine (KCCR) on the campus of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana.

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