

Neglected Tropical Disease NGDO Network: The Abu Dhabi Declaration of Support for an SDG Global Indicator for NTDs

During their sixth annual meeting in Abu Dhabi, UAE, in September 2015, members of the Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Nongovernmental Development Organization (NGDO) Network (NNN) declared their full and unanimous support for a global indicator for NTDs for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, Target 3.3, reflecting language endorsed by the World Health Organization and the NTD community:

The number of people requiring interventions against NTDs

More than 1.4 billion of the world's poorest people suffer from NTDs, including 500 million children. These diseases perpetuate poverty by causing blindness, malnutrition, anemia, disfigurement, and disability — preventing children from attending school and parents from going to work. The NNN is a global forum for NGDOs working to meet international targets to control or eliminate NTDs such as onchocerciasis, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminthiasis, trachoma, and leprosy. Our continued and active collaboration is a critical component of efforts to reduce extreme poverty.

Member NGDOs are uniquely placed, given their field-based programs and experience, to assist in reaching the world's most underserved populations, like those suffering from NTDs. The NNN promotes comprehensive approaches that prevent, treat, and manage consequences of diseases that affect the poorest of the poor. Prevention activities include hygiene behavior change, promoting access to water and sanitation as well as integrating interventions within the education sector school feeding programs to tackle malnutrition. Preventive chemotherapy for NTDs is typically administered through mass drug administration using donated medicines from several major global pharmaceutical companies, including Eisai, GSK, Johnson & Johnson, MSD¹, Merck Serono, and Pfizer. Management of consequences from NTDs is a continuum of care that includes morbidity management, community-based rehabilitation, and stigma reduction.

Guided by a shared commitment to equitable and sustainable development, members are committed to working closely together to combat NTDs and reaffirm their support of the following activities:

- Support governments to achieve control and elimination targets of endemic NTDs
- Finalize baseline disease mapping
- Scale up of mass drug administration and behavior change activities for sustained impact
- Implementing field ready tools and practices informed by clinical and operational research and the best available data
- Align NTD programs with nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs where appropriate to help break the cycle of disease and enable appropriate care for those suffering from NTDs
- Strengthen health systems, especially at the community level, by empowering communities to control disease through provision of services, training community health workers, and implementing information, communication and education campaigns

¹ Known in the United States and Canada as Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, NJ, USA

- Scale up efforts to address the need for surgical intervention and home based care for those suffering from NTDs, and reduce NTD-related stigma and discrimination
- Promote gender equity and the inclusion of people with NTD-related disabilities in mainstream services and development programs, and of people with disabilities in all NTD programs
- Develop clear guidelines as to where and when to stop treatment to achieve elimination targets

In support of the proposed global indicator for NTDs under SDG 3, Target 3.3, and the SDGs in general, members also affirm their commitment to:

- Support data collection for the NTD Global Indicator
- Support ministries of health to analyze and publish the results of the data collected
- Work in partnership with key stakeholders and decision makers, nationally and internationally to achieve control and elimination targets through prioritization of NTDs
- Support the implementation of the WHO WASH and NTDs Strategy and Action Plan 2015 - 2020, launched at this meeting.

Endorsed by NTD NGDO NETWORK Members

American Leprosy Missions

Mr. Bill Simmons, President and CEO

Austrian Leprosy Relief Association

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Light for the World

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