



NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASE NGO NETWORK

A global forum for nongovernmental organizations
working together on NTDs

NNN 2020 Communiqué

Accelerating to 2030: Building Resilient NTD Programmes in a Changing World

Operating under the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is testing how we work together to address critical challenges at home and across borders. Support for international cooperation hangs in the balance at precisely the moment when robust collaboration is needed most. In 2020 the importance of resilience and sustainability have never been more relevant to global discussion than they are today, as a fractured global community tackles the evolving human tragedy, the stark inequalities within and between countries, and an economic crisis that COVID-19 forced to centre stage.

The ongoing pandemic challenges the global NTD community to confront the long overdue paradigm shifts at the core of the soon to be released *World Health Organization (WHO) [road map for NTDs, 2021 – 2030](#)*: strong, accountable local and national leadership; integration and cross-sectoral collaboration; equity and impact.

Accelerating to 2030

Within the context of this year's conference theme the High-level Panel and workshop discussions have made it abundantly clear that success is not inevitable and nor is it guaranteed. We must endeavour to challenge ourselves to do better and to work together within and outside of NTDs in order to support WHO and countries to 'build back better,' and work to cement the foundations for the resilient and strong health systems which all communities deserve and which will enable a world free from NTDs for all.

More than 1,000 participants representing nearly 300 organisations across 80 countries came together virtually to explore [innovative ideas](#) and catalytic opportunities to accelerate NTD progress with partners from other sectors, in service to the new NTD road map and Sustainable Development Goals.

Our commitment

- The NNN is committed to supporting endemic countries and communities by ensuring our support to the WHO road map for NTDs 2021 – 2030 and doing what we do [BEST](#): identify gaps, mobilise to understand them and develop approaches to learn and improve NTD programming and collaboration.
- We understand the need to see individuals in the context of their communities and not only their diseases, focusing our attention on people-centred strategies through holistic and inclusive programmes. During this annual conference, the NGO community adopted a new [statement of commitment to the participation of persons affected by NTDs](#). We recognise that we still have work ahead of us in putting this commitment to action, and that this is a journey we will take together.
- The pandemic has emphasized the critical importance of a multi-sector approach across education, clean water, decent sanitation and access to hygiene services in the prevention, treatment and care of diseases. We must broaden and deepen our partnerships to implement NTD programs, that will contribute to strengthened health systems and ultimately support equitable access to all through universal health coverage
- NNN members recognised the additional burden that conflict and humanitarian emergencies place on fragile health systems, with the NNN launching a [new resource guide for these emergencies](#) to better support members implementing NTD programs in these environments. The NNN offers our gratitude to community health workers and other key workers for their unfailing commitment to the health of their communities.

The NNN 2020 conference galvanised the NTD NGO community's commitment to resilience, sustainability, cross-sectoral collaboration, and inclusion as principles that will guide our actions over the next decade. On the final day of the conference WHO announced Myanmar was validated for eliminating trachoma as a public health problem—a case example for how the cross-sectoral principles of the NNN BEST framework come into play to achieve the goals set forth by the road map, and what can be done when we work effectively together.

Dr Mwele Malecela, the Director of the Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases at the World Health Organization, acknowledged, **"We all have our roles to play for the road map to succeed, and we all need each other."**