

## **NNN 2023 Conference Communique: Inspiring transgenerational change to end NTDs**

The Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Network (NNN) convened at the **14th Annual NNN Conference in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**, from the **19th to 21st of September 2023**, under the theme **“Reaching New Frontiers- Powering a new Generation of Leadership and Cross-Sectoral Collaborations to End NTDs.”** The theme stands on the pillars of the WHO road map for NTDs2021–2030 and reflects the NNN’s commitment to cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships centering endemic voices in the fight against NTDs.

The conference brought together more than **450 delegates, from 54 countries, representing 206 organizations** that are actively working in NTDs. The conference was inaugurated by **Honorable Maryprisca Winfred Mahundi**, Member of Parliament and the Deputy Minister of Water and Irrigation, on behalf of **Her Excellency, Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania**. The inaugural address from the Honourable deputy minister shone light on Tanzania’s success in battling NTDs including lymphatic filariasis and trachoma, and placed a distinct importance on the need for better cross-sectoral collaboration to eliminate NTDs. The opening plenary was also addressed virtually by **Dr. Ibrahima Socé Fall**, Director of the Department of NTDs, WHO. Dr. Fall’s rallying call focused on the urgency and sheer potential that lies ahead of us in delivering the commitments of the 2021-2030 NTD roadmap.

The NNN stands as the representative body for NGOs supporting NTD elimination worldwide and acknowledges the pressing issues facing the NTD community as we reach the halfway mark of the NTDs road map. Conference workshops, rapid fire sessions, and events explored cross-cutting topics such as addressing social determinants of health, advancing health equity for hard-to-reach communities, building evidence for action, communication and advocacy, strengthening health systems & capacity building to promote country ownership, mental health in NTDs, and technological innovation and solutions. With the recognition that NTDs disproportionately affect marginalized and hard-to-reach communities, the NNN reaffirms our commitment to amplify the voices of NTD endemic regions, embodying a shared vision of a world free of NTDs.

Through our conference, we recognize the need to create regional networks and collaborations and explore pathways to facilitate region-led discussions. A special session on September 18th highlighted the need for regional collaborations to advance region-specific solutions to challenges, and promote cross-border coordination in routine NTD programmes.

As we work towards the 2030 NTD road map goals and stand committed under shared values, we recognize the need to hand the torch to a new generation of change makers. As we bear witness to your stories of igniting change and transformation, we are reminded that a new generation of change makers await. Throughout the conference, we have seen youths striving to lead, learn, and connect. Because of this, we are reminded of the power of a platform such as the NNN. The NNN commits to putting youth at the forefront of our efforts, amplifying your creativity and unwavering spirit to end NTDs. The 2023 Annual Conference was a step in the direction. Over the three days, we joined hands with youths in NTDs representing different youth-led organizations to host two youth-centric events. As we discussed how best to involve youth in NTDs, we recognize that this should be an on-going conversation and not tied down to a specific conference, event, or agenda.

The NNN recognizes the importance of our platform, not only to support affected communities, endemic country governments, implementing partners, and research communities, but also our collective responsibility to be catalysts of impactful change. The need to foster better collaboration comes with an urgent call for the NNN to reflect on our operations and remit, leveraging our position as the convening body of NTDs NGOs across the world.

#### **Our Commitment:**

- The NNN understands that NTDs transcend borders and sees the need for collaborative efforts on a global scale. We commit to enhancing partnerships and regional networks – between governments, international organizations, academia, the private sector, and civil society – as we work together to create synergies that accelerate progress.

- The NNN recognizes the pivotal role that youths play in the fight against NTDs and commits to fostering a new generation of change makers, amplifying their voice and will to inspire change and cultivate steadfast leadership.

Our work extends beyond the conference. We recognize the challenges ahead but stay true to our commitments and renew our pledge to break down barriers and embrace innovation by increasing participation, fostering creativity, and creating a legitimate and independent space within the NTD community for members to share ideas to ultimately bring an end to NTDs.



## NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASE NGO NETWORK

A global forum for nongovernmental organizations  
working together on NTDs