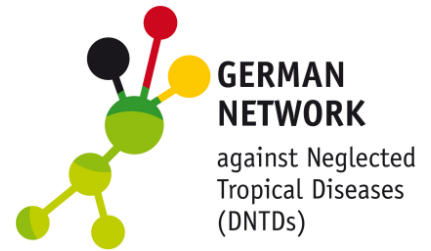


Translation of the German letter

With this letter, the German Network against NTDs calls upon the German Chancellor and the German Sherpa for the G7 to include neglected tropical diseases in the mandate of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and to strengthen its support for research activities into NTDs.



Berlin, 18.12.2014

Dear Chancellor Dr Merkel,

Position of the German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (DNTDs)

Include neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in the Global Fund Strengthen Research and Development in the fight against NTDs

The German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (DNTDs) is a national platform which, together with national and international partners, advocates a stepping up of the fight against poverty-associated tropical infectious diseases. The German Network endorses the London Declaration on NTDs and wishes to support the World Health Organization (WHO) and national programmes in bringing at least 10 of the 17 NTDs under control by the end of this decade.

The German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (DNTDs) welcomes the inclusion of antibiotic resistance, neglected diseases, poverty-related diseases, and Ebola in the list of key topics for next year's G7 summit under the presidency of Germany.

More than one billion people worldwide are at risk to become infected by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). Children are deprived of their development prospects; maternal mortality is much higher among infected women. Adults become unable to work. The disease burden due to NTDs is comparable to that of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Yet, the German public has so far taken hardly any notice of NTDs. This needs to be changed.

All the more so since the successful prevention and treatment of NTDs is to a large extent already possible and can even be achieved at relatively low cost. In many countries there are already partnership programmes in which civil society, industry, the affected countries and the WHO successfully cooperate. These partnership programmes need to be expanded and extended to cover the endemic regions. The current focus is on the so-called "Big 5" (Onchocerciasis, Trachoma, Schistosomiasis, Lymphatic Filariasis and Soil-transmitted Helminths). The objective is to make sure that the health interventions currently available to prevent and treat these poverty-related diseases reach those people who most urgently need them. The recent Ebola outbreak has demonstrated how fragile and underdeveloped the healthcare systems in developing countries are.

1. Extension of the mandate of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)

The setting up of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), which became a central tool in supporting affected countries in their efforts to implement suitable treatment programmes. This has shown how successful a concerted campaign by

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the global community can be. NTDs were disregarded during the creation of the GFATM, which, was initiated to a great extent by the G8. This omission now needs to be corrected.

The German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (DNTDs) calls upon the German government to advocate for an extension of the GFATM mandate to the additional fight against NTDs as part of its presidency at the G7 summit in 2015. Towards this end, an additional 300 million Euros per year are required in total. The German contribution to the GFATM should be increased by 100 million Euros per year

The GFATM should ensure that drug programmes are coordinated appropriately and, whenever possible, integrated to prevent parallel structures and to exploit synergies. The GFATM should also ensure high-quality implementation and install appropriate operational research activities to detect any shortfalls.

2. Strengthening of research and development as part of G7

The development of new vaccines and medicines is essential to the effective fight against a number of NTDs. There is an urgent need to expand and intensify research and development activities in the area of neglected tropical diseases, too. In view of the risks from the possible transmission of dangerous disease pathogens from animals to humans (“zoonoses”), as illustrated recently by Ebola, the strengthening of basic research into NTDs is also essential.

The German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (DNTDs) calls upon the German government to endorse a substantial strengthening of global research and development activities in the field of neglected tropical diseases and the founding of a Global Health Research Fund financed jointly at the forthcoming G7 summit.

Germany should lead the way in promoting research and development and set up a separate initiative for NTDs at the German Centre for Infection Research (DZIF), funding it with adequate additional resources. The recent extension of the European & Developing Countries' Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) is much welcomed but it can constitute only a first step.

The German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (DNTDs) calls upon the German government to fund the DZIF with an additional amount of at least 5 million Euros per year to promote the translational research for new diagnostics, drugs and vaccines for the fight against NTDs.

Conclusion

The WHO's roadmap for the fight against NTDs anticipates reducing or eliminating the majority of the diseases by 2025. This objective seems realistic if appropriate tools and adequate resources are available in a well coordinated manner. In this way, the health and the development prospects of millions of people can be improved decisively.

The German Network against Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), with its members from science, the business and civil society, is more than willing to become involved in setting up and implementing new ideas in the fight against neglected tropical diseases, and to offer the German government advice and support. We will gladly engage in dialogue and provide further information for your decision-making.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Markus Engstler, representing the University of Würzburg, Faculty of Biology

Frank Gotthardt, representing Merck

Prof. Dr. Achim Hörauf (tropical disease specialist at Bonn University Hospital)

Dr. Christa Kasang, representing Missionsärztliches Institut Würzburg

Prof. Dr. KH Martin Kollmann, representing Christoffel Blindenmission (CBM)

Aziz Lamere, representing Narud e.V.

Dr. Dr. Carsten Köhler (tropical disease specialist at the Tropical Medicine Centre of Excellence of the University of Tübingen)

Burkard Kömm, representing DAHW Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe e.V.

Prof. Dr. Jürgen May, representing the Bernhard Nocht Institute

Dr. Beatrice Moreno

Dr. Timm Schneider (tropical disease specialist at the University of Düsseldorf)

Dr. Andrea Sydow (tropical disease specialist)

Dr. Matthias Vennemann (tropical disease specialist and international health consultant)

Roger Welz, representing WertSecur Stiftungsberatung und Management GmbH

Harald Zimmer, representing the Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (vfa)