

AN INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO FIGHT NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of preventable and treatable diseases that affect about 1.65 billion people around the world. NTDs cause immeasurable suffering. They debilitate, disfigure and can be fatal. By most commonly affecting some of the most vulnerable people in the world – who often live in remote communities – NTDs create cycles of poverty and cost low and middle incomes countries billions of dollars every year. Moreover, NTD funding is neglected in comparison with the magnitude of the public health threat they represent, and unlike other infectious diseases, there is currently no pooled funding mechanism to support their control or elimination.

We, as a collective of G7 member state civil society partners, call on the G7 to:

Financially commit 1% of global health aid to fund neglected tropical disease programmes, which support the delivery of the World Health Organisations NTD road map (2021-2030) and will contribute towards the target of 100 countries eliminating at least one NTD by 2030.

Programmatic actions to end NTDs are based on the ethical principle that all lives are of equal value. We hope the G7, under Italy's presidency, continues, as they have done previously, most recently during the Hiroshima 2023 G7 and the Elmau 2022 G7 summits, to prioritise NTDs and the people that are impacted by these devastating diseases. We call on Italy to follow Brazil's example of including NTDs on the G20 agenda in its 2024 presidency.

The WHO NTD road map (2021-2030) outlines the actions needed to achieve the SDG target of a 90% reduction in people requiring an intervention against NTDs by 2030 and sets out its own ambitious targets to achieve this. These include 100 countries eliminating at least one NTD by 2030. This is doable, and as of December 2023, 50 countries around the world have eliminated at least one NTD, with several having eliminated more than one, meaning we are halfway towards the WHO target.

A commitment to NTDs will also follow from the conclusions of the **C20 during the Italian Presidency in 2021**, where it was noted that “*despite long-standing global commitments, the world has yet to end HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and malaria as epidemics; eradicate*

***neglected tropical diseases**; manage non-communicable diseases and address mental health effectively; provide quality services for nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR)”.*

The WHO NTD Roadmap seeks to promote resilience, health system strengthening, equity and country ownership, all of which require strong collaboration and partnership. NTD programmes continue to face difficulties in recovering from pandemic-related disruptions, and their performance is still far from pre-COVID-19 levels. In line with the [Kigali Declaration](#) on Neglected Tropical Diseases adopted in 2022, renewed commitment by global leadership is required to attain the targets set for 2030.

Far from being a public health challenge of only communities experiencing conditions of poverty, NTDs are relevant to several **Sustainable Development Goals** and current cross-cutting global priorities, including:

- Universal health coverage (UHC): the goal of ensuring everyone has access to the full range of quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship cannot be achieved without reaching the bottom billion affected by NTDs. Tracking access to NTD services will tell how successful we are in attaining UHC.
- Climate change: several NTDs are vector-borne and climate-sensitive. Unless countermeasures are taken, the burden of NTDs may grow and their endemic areas expand. We have witnessed the spread of dengue (and other NTDs) into southern Italy and France already and the UK government recently noted it was one of the most significant risks to public health.
- Health security: NTDs such as dengue have the potential to disrupt health services, economies and societal well-being. Conversely, measures deployed to prepare and respond to future pandemics should make provision for maintenance of essential health services, especially in areas where these are already weak, such as in countries affected by NTDs.
- Support the research and development of vaccines, medicines and diagnostics and provide access to affordable essential medicines, vaccines and diagnostics. Even in some high-income countries the access to NTD medicines and diagnostics through national health systems is not guaranteed.

The signatories of this letter represent national networks – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, USA – that are committed to raise awareness for the necessity and urgency to fighting NTDs. NTDs are an urgent cross-border issue and therefore we call on

the respective governments meeting at the G7 Summit to honour their commitments and visibly support the fight against NTDs.

Sincerely,

The Canadian Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases

The Francophone Network on Neglected Tropical Diseases

The German Network Against Neglected Tropical Diseases

The Italian Network Against Neglected Tropical Diseases

SDG Promise Japan

The United Kingdom Coalition Against Neglected Tropical Disease

The United States Neglected Tropical Disease Roundtable

Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases

