

## ***Governments and private donors pledge US\$812 million around five-day summit in Geneva; World Leaders Recommit to Ending Neglected Tropical Diseases***

GENEVA, Switzerland, April 19, 2017/ -- This week, leaders from governments, pharmaceutical companies and private donors gathered in Geneva for a five-day summit to recommit to ending neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

The meeting comes five years after the launch of the [World Leaders Declaration on NTDs](http://APO.af/5jKHBH) ( <http://APO.af/5jKHBH> ), a commitment by world leaders to end NTDs by 2020.

NTDs are some of the oldest and most painful diseases, afflicting the world's poorest communities. One billion people live with NTDs, and 1.2 billion are at risk of infection.

### **New Report Shows Dramatic Progress**

A new report titled [Integrating Neglected Tropical Diseases in Global Health and Development](http://APO.af/GaR2bN) ( <http://APO.af/GaR2bN> ) by the WHO reveals that NTDs are no longer considered a global health threat.

“WHO has observed record-breaking progress towards bringing ancient scourges like sleeping sickness, river blindness and lymphatic filariasis under control,” said Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General.

The report detailed progress against each disease, citing countries and regions that are reaching control targets.

- **Lymphatic filariasis (LF) reaching towards elimination** (Cambodia, Cook Islands, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Nepal, Samoa, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu)
- **Fewest-ever cases of human African trypanosomiasis (HAT) in sleeping sickness** (Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe)
- **Eighty-two percent decrease in visceral leishmaniasis (VL) cases in India, Nepal and Bangladesh**
- **Guinea worm disease nearing eradication** (Guinea worm disease have reduced from an estimated 3.5 million cases in 2000 to 1.5 million in 2015)

### **Global Donors Pledge Additional Support**

Governments and other donors have pledged additional support to NTD control efforts. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation committed \$35 million in grants over the next five years.

“NTDs are some of the most painful, debilitating and stigmatizing diseases that affect the world’s poorest people,” said Dr. Chan.

“Thanks to this partnership, these neglected diseases are now getting the attention they deserve so few people are aware of.”

The Belgian government also pledged an additional \$27 million, spread equally over the next nine years.

As part of its commitment to eliminating HAT, Vestergaard pledged to donate 20 percent of its insecticide-treated bed net production to NTD control efforts.

These commitments build on the UK Government’s announcement earlier this week, in which it pledged to provide \$100 million in NTD control efforts over the next five years.

## Industry Contributions Expand Scale and Reach of NTD Program

Progress against NTDs has been enabled by the large-scale donation of medicines by 10 pharmaceutical companies.

In a [statement](#) ( <http://APO.af/55buit> ) released today, industry leaders said:

“The London Declaration is a powerful example of the impact of strong partnerships and shared commitment to ending NTDs.”

In addition to donations, pharmaceutical companies are [working together](#) ( <http://APO.af/55buit> ) with academic and public health institutions to develop new medicines and improve delivery systems.

- Sanofi and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases (DND) have agreed to jointly develop and distribute a new oral treatment for lymphatic filariasis.
- Several companies are working to develop pediatric formulations of existing NTD medicines, including ivermectin, albendazole, and diethylcarbamazine.
- AbbVie, Bayer, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson and Merck KGaA are part of the Macrofilaricide Drug Accelerator Program.
- Bayer is working with DND to develop emodepside, an oral treatment for lymphatic filariasis.
- Eisai is working with DND to develop ravuconazole, a new oral drug currently in phase 2 clinical trials for onchocerciasis.
- GlaxoSmithKline and DND have agreed to jointly pursue the pre-clinical development of a new oral treatment for onchocerciasis.
- In 2015, Eisai, Shionogi, Takeda, AstraZeneca and DND launched the [NTD Drug Accelerator Program](#) ( <http://APO.af/55buit> ).

### Discovery Booster

<http://APO.af/bbHZQG>

- Many companies – including AbbVie, AstraZeneca, Bayer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Celgene, ChemoCentryx, Eisai, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, Merck KGaA, Novartis, Pfizer, Sanofi, Takeda, and Vertex – are working with DND to develop new medicines and improve delivery systems.
- Gilead is collaborating with the US Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and DND to develop a new oral treatment for onchocerciasis.

Companies are also working with partners to solve supply chain problems, develop program strategies, and strengthen health systems.

## Addressing the Challenges Ahead

Though tremendous progress has been made in reducing the burden of NTDs, global control and elimination remain a challenge.

### Financial Resources

Although nearly a billion people received NTD treatments in 2015, more funding is needed to ensure that everyone has access to the medicines and services they need.

In addition to government funding, private philanthropy is helping to address these gaps by supporting research, development, and delivery of new medicines and services.

### Political Commitment

Strong leadership from affected countries is vital to sustaining progress against NTDs, particularly in the areas of financing, health systems, and community engagement.

“Ethiopia is fully committed to realizing ambitious, yet achievable, elimination targets for trachoma and onchocerciasis,” said Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

### New Tools and Innovations

The <http://APO.af/oloCnt>  
NTD Summit  
<http://APO.af/mEY60y>

The 10 diseases covered by the (London Declaration included [http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009\\_05\\_14/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_05_14/en/)) Guinea v

The London Declaration on NTDs (<http://APO.af/O>)