



## PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH RESOURCE MOBILISATION: FINANCIALLY RESOURCING AN AFRICA FREE OF NTDS BY ENDEMIC MEMBER STATES

### Addis Ababa Call to Action

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We, the African Union Member States and Development Partners convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the sidelines of the 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union to promote sustainability to ensure an Africa-free of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).
- B. Recognise the heavy burden of NTDs on the people of Africa including the most vulnerable.
- C. Acknowledge the continued vulnerability of Africa's NTDs control, elimination, and eradication programmes due to heavy reliance on external funding.
- D. We recognize the important role of working with National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs), in creating an enabling regulatory environment for research, product development, and manufacturing of the medicines needed to eliminate NTDs. We further call upon the countries that have not yet ratified the AMA Treaty to expedite the ratification processes for all AU Member States to work together in ensuring access and safety of medicines.
- E. Recognize the commitment and strong country ownership of countries that have already eliminated specific NTDs including Togo, the first country in the world to be validated for eliminating four NTDs (Guinea worm disease, lymphatic filariasis, sleeping sickness, and trachoma) Mali and Benin (trachoma) in 2023, joining 18 other African Union Member States who have already eliminated at least one NTD and urge other countries to follow their example.
- F. Noting that as countries achieve validation for the elimination of NTDs as a public health concern, sustained investments in post-elimination surveillance and cross-border collaboration are crucial to prevent the re-emergence of previously eliminated NTDs.
- G. Note that the elimination of NTDs has the potential to reduce poverty across the continent. This encompasses poverty alleviation, the promotion of inclusive education, the advancement of gender equality, the reduction of disparities, the development of human capital, and the stimulation of economic growth.
- H. Acknowledge the significant role of the NRAs in facilitating the approval and registration of the remedies needed to eliminate NTDs and monitor their safety building on the ongoing efforts of the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) and the AU-Smart Safety Surveillance (AU-3S).
- I. Acknowledge the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's (Africa CDC's) pivotal support in enhancing the capabilities of Member States and regional health systems to effectively prevent and manage high-burden diseases, including NTDs, by applying One Health and equity principles, and fostering local manufacturing in Africa
- J. Recognize the inclusion of the lifesaving Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis in the GAVI portfolio that countries can now apply for and the need for rapid adoption and deployment of the recently approved pediatric praziquantel, opening the way for countries to extend



treatment for schistosomiasis to children below 5 years old that are not currently covered through mass scale treatment.

- K. Welcome global funding commitments for NTDs, particularly initiatives such as the Reaching Last Mile Fund (RLMF), which aims to eliminate river blindness and lymphatic filariasis throughout Africa.
- L. Acknowledge the need to intensify domestic resource mobilization efforts to accelerate NTD control and elimination including through integrated approaches and roll out of multisectoral End Malaria and NTDs Councils and Funds.
- M. Note that strengthening integrated approaches through the implementation of the One Health Approach, as well as incorporating NTDs into primary healthcare encompassing prevention, control, treatment, and disability management, is vital.
- N. Recognize that the socio-economic and structural transformation of Africa hinges on the health of its citizens. Both domestic and international investments in addressing NTDs and health, including from the private and public sectors, will strengthen health systems and support Universal Health Coverage, Agenda 2063, and the envisioned targets of the Continental Framework on the Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases and WHO NTDs Roadmap.
- O. Recognize the importance of the Kigali Declaration on NTDs and its associated commitment tracker and commit to supporting its endorsement at the Member State level to mobilize political will, community commitment, resources, and action necessary to end the suffering caused by NTDs.
- P. Note the sustained commitment of the African Union leadership to increase domestic investments in health since 2000, alongside the support of international development partners, amidst competing development priorities.
- Q. Recognize that young people can play a vital role in the fight against NTDs by leveraging their energy, creativity, and passion to improve the health and well-being of their communities.
- R. Further acknowledges that despite progress made, significant efforts are still required to achieve NTDs control and elimination objectives for Africa's development aspirations to be realized.

## II. Call to Action

We commit ourselves to the following actions:

- a) Increase domestic financing for NTDs through the allocation of domestic budgets and the establishment of End Malaria and NTDs councils.
- b) Maximize existing global health initiatives and financing mechanisms including from bilateral and multi-lateral banks that are accessible to countries for the financing of NTD National Master Plans.
- c) Prioritise NTDs within the broader health and development agenda, including primary health care, linked to the One Health and Universal Health Coverage priorities, Pandemic preparedness, and Climate Change and Health.
- d) Ensure that real-time data are available to drive programming decisions, including through intensified cross-border collaboration.
- e) Endorse the Kigali Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases and input national domestic data for NTDs on the Commitment Tracker.

