



Message from
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on the occasion of
World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day
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On this year's World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day, under the slogan of "Unite. Act. Eliminate.", the World Health Organization is calling on everyone to unite and act to support the growing momentum to end these diseases that should belong to the past.

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) affect the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. They cost billions annually in direct health costs, lost productivity and reduced socioeconomic and educational attainment. They are also responsible for disability, stigma and discrimination. But these days, we have the tools that can prevent, control, eliminate and eradicate NTDs.

While implementing our 5-year regional vision of Health for All by All, I witnessed transformative action in the fight against NTDs. Yemen eliminated lymphatic filariasis. Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq and Saudi Arabia eliminated trachoma. Countries demonstrated strong commitment and forged positive collaboration with our partners, and these actions have been the drivers of our successes. However, our work is far from done.

Countries in our Region face a significant threat of re-emerging NTDs due to ongoing armed conflict, population displacement and disruptions to health care delivery systems. Climate change also affects the spread of NTDs. Skin-related NTDs, in particular, are highly prevalent in the Region, which has the unfortunate record of reporting more than 75% of the global number of cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis. Unfortunately, a lack of resources has proven to be a significant barrier in the control, elimination and eradication of NTDs.

On World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day, let us acknowledge our achievements and prepare for the journey ahead. Only by prioritizing the most marginalized and guaranteeing equitable access to health services for NTDs can universal health coverage be realized. A truly universal approach leaves no one behind.

I urge leaders, donors, partners and communities to join the worldwide effort to end the neglect and provide care for all those who need it. The end of NTDs is within our reach and each of us has a critical role in fostering a future free of the devastating health, social and economic consequences that impact people living with an NTD.

Let's Unite, Act, and Eliminate NTDs.

