

COMMON AFRICAN POSITION AND THE CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORK ON THE CONTROL AND ELIMINATION OF NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES IN AFRICA BY 2030

1 Background

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are diverse diseases and conditions prevalent mainly in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The World Health Organization (WHO) currently lists 20 NTDs composed of parasitic, bacterial, fungal, viral, and non-communicable diseases endemic in 49-member states on the continent and affecting over 600 million individuals, representing 42% of the global burden of NTDs. While they are both curable and preventable, NTDs cause more than 500 000 deaths annually. Although mortality is relatively low, morbidity and their public health burden are extremely high. Untreated, NTDs can cause blindness, disfigurement, chronic pain, cognitive impairment and other long-term disability and irreversible damages that create obstacles to education, employment, economic growth as well as stigmatisation with disastrous social exclusions by families, communities and society. Reducing the burden of mortality and morbidity caused by NTDs is integral to improving the health of the world's poorest people. The 2001 Abuja declaration on health financing must be recognised by all Member States.

WHO has developed key approaches to detect, prevent, control, eliminate and eradicate NTDs such as : preventive chemotherapy (mass treatment); innovative and intensified disease management; vector ecology and management; provision of clean Water and Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and veterinary public health to protect and improve human health. In parallel individuals receiving preventive chemotherapy, the environmental factors leading to the transmission of the infections, such as safe water, sanitation and hygiene need also to be addressed. Accelerated efforts are needed to achieve the agenda 2063 goal of healthy and well-nourished citizens whereby Africa will be free of all NTDs and also the SDG 3.3 target of reducing by 90% the number of people requiring interventions for NTDs by 2030. Evidently, effective commitment towards NTDs is much needed and vital for their elimination.

2 Vision

The Continental Framework's vision is to free Africa of all NTDs by 2030. The mission is to strive towards the integration of strategies and efforts made by Africa to control and eliminate NTDs across the entire continent and to contribute for global eradication efforts.

3 Objectives

The objectives include:

i. Full integration of interventions to control NTDs with a multi-sectoral approach including water, sanitation and hygiene/health education, vector control, veterinary public health, preventive chemotherapy, innovative and intensified disease management; ii. Harmonisation of community-based initiatives including community engagement and ownership; iii. Advocacy for establishing fully functional NTDs programs through provision of adequate national financial resources and; iv. Coordination with other relevant sectors at national level for the integration of NTDs into the mainstream health initiatives.

4 Guiding Principles

Ten principles should guide actions:

- i. Country leadership and ownership of national NTDs control programs.
- ii. National financing of NTDs programs through allocation of funds from the national budget;
- iii. Coordination and harmonization of interventions related to NTDs by various stakeholders in country and within communities;
- iv. Integration of control initiatives from various NTDs;
- v. Development of effective external partnerships;



- vi. **Internal partnerships** with relevant ministries within countries for a multisectoral approach;
- vii. **Community-based strategies** to ensure ownership of programs;
- viii. **Advocacy** for improved diagnosis and treatment through innovative technologies;
- ix. **Prevention** as key focus area of control for NTDs as it is cost-effective and efficient in reducing disease burden;
- x. **Cross border cooperation** in management and control of NTDs.

5 Strategic approaches

The strategic approaches to promote are as follows :

- i. **Increase national financing for NTDs** through advocacy for the establishment of fully functional NTDs programs in all Member States;
- ii. **Mobilise Human Resource** through engaging Member States to ensure that NTDs programs are adequately staffed for sustainability to be achieved;
- iii. **Harmonise and coordinate initiatives** by supporting Member States in the harmonisation and coordination of interventions by implementing partners;
- iv. **Promote partnerships** and collaboration by encouraging Member States to engage all relevant sectors critical for the elimination of NTDs;
- v. **Engage communities** from programs inception up to implementation;
- vi. **Integration** with other programs using community health workers through inclusion of a component on NTDs in training packages for community health workers;
- vii. **Use alternative strategies** through advocacy for the inclusion of vector control and health education in intervention packages for the control of NTDs;
- viii. **Support research, development, and innovative technologies** through advocacy for increased funding targeted on the control of NTDs and an enabling environment for R & D at country level;
- ix. **Categorise interventions** by ensuring that Member States and stakeholders prioritise the NTDs based on national prevalence.

6 Institutional roles and responsibilities approaches

Responsibilities are as follow:

- i. The African Union Commission (AUC) has the leading role for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the Continental framework.
- ii. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) provide technical support to Member States and advocating for increased resources for NTD programs and coordinating advocacy, development and management of cross-border and cross-country initiatives and projects;
- iii. b) Member States take overall responsibility, ownership, and leadership for the implementation of the Continental Framework for NTDs 2020-2030;
- iv. International Development Partners support countries in the development of policies, normative guidelines, strengthening of information systems and data collection, M&E systems, and accountability frameworks for the elimination of NTDs in Africa and also support Member states in finances mobilisation;
- v. Civil Society Organizations support the implementation of policies and advocate for accountability and community mobilization, provide strategic information, capacity development and resource mobilisation;
- vi. Private Sector, research institutions and academia generate and share evidence for programs, diagnosis and treatment of NTDs;
- vii. Communities strengthen ownership in NTD programmes.

7 Implementation/Monitoring and Evaluation

To promote a sustainable control of NTDs, all stakeholders should be engaged for an efficient implementation and close monitoring of selected indicators developed through a monitoring and evaluation framework.