

Campaign and promotion plan World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2025 (30 January)

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| <u>Slogan</u> | Involving communities. A hands-on approach to neglected diseases. |
| <u>Key communication outcome</u> | Engage policy makers, health service providers, and the general public, raising awareness of the importance of giving voice to populations and directly involving people in actions to prevent, control, and eliminate neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) so that this is sustainable and respects different ways of life. |
| <u>Background</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTDs are a group of more than 20 conditions that are widespread in the poorest regions of the world and in vulnerable populations, where access to safe water, basic sanitation, and health care is inadequate or non-existent. • Caused primarily by a variety of pathogens including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, and toxins, NTDs affect more than a billion people worldwide and are responsible for thousands of preventable deaths each year. In the Region of the Americas, more than 50 million people are in need of intervention against these infections. • These diseases are referred to as "neglected" because, historically, they have had a limited presence on the global public health agenda, receiving little attention and funding. However, in recent years, this picture has begun to change, and these diseases are attracting more attention and financial resources. • NTDs are formally recognized in target 3.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which states a commitment to end NTDs by 2030. Therefore, achieving the SDGs is directly dependent on achieving the NTD-related targets. • NTDs can result in disability, stigmatization, social exclusion, and discrimination, leading to suffering and harm to mental health • PAHO and its Member States seek to eliminate more than 30 communicable diseases and related conditions by 2030, 12 of them in the group of NTDs in the Americas. The diseases elimination initiative involves working with a common, integrated, sustainable approach, promoting linkages and synergies within the health system and with other sectors. • Neglected tropical diseases can be prevented, controlled, and eliminated. As |

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| | <p>of December 2024, 54 countries in the world had achieved the elimination of at least one NTD, including Brazil, which recently eliminated lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Region of the Americas, 11 countries have achieved at least one of the elimination targets Among the most outstanding achievements is the elimination of onchocerciasis in four countries: Colombia (2013), Ecuador (2014), Guatemala (2016) and Mexico (2015). In addition, Mexico, in 2017, eliminated trachoma as a public health problem. Mexico also eliminated dog-borne human rabies in 2019, becoming the first country in the world to eliminate this disease. More information at Regional data portal: PAHO's initiative to eliminate communicable diseases in the Americas. • It is necessary to involve communities in strategic planning, put them at the center of the initiative, and empower them to seek actions that respect their way of life and offer them autonomy. • It is necessary to develop strategies based on the social and environmental determinants of health to promote long-term sustainable actions for NTD prevention and control. • Actions that improve access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, for example, are essential to ensure improved quality of life, prevent many NTDs, and reduce vulnerability to them. One of the targets on the NTD's roadmap is for 100% of NTD-endemic areas to have access to at least basic water services. • It is necessary to strengthen actions based on One Health to achieve a comprehensive and unifying approach aimed at balancing and optimizing the health of people, animals, and ecosystems, all of which is essential for the control and elimination of many NTDs. • Through integrated actions against NTDs, health care can be offered that responds to the multiple needs of populations living in areas far from health centers. These include maternal and child care, vaccination, diagnosis and treatment of various diseases, and the mass administration of drugs to combat NTDs. |
| <p><u>Target audiences</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health policy makers, donors; ministries of health, environment and animal health; researchers, academia, civil society, and international cooperation organizations. • Implementers of neglected tropical disease programs, volunteers, and community members. • Populations requiring interventions for neglected tropical diseases. |

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| <p><u>Call to Action</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day, PAHO calls on governments, health workers, cooperation agencies, and community and civil organizations, which play an important role in collective efforts to eliminate and control these infections, to work on comprehensive health actions focused on populations and communities. • Involve individuals and communities. It is essential to strengthen communities in order to leave installed capacities, ensuring that people are at the center of sustainable actions. A key action is to highlight the importance of giving people and communities a voice in the construction of actions that respect different ways of life. • Address social and environmental determinants of health, including intersectoral collaboration to achieve sustainability in actions to prevent and control these diseases, including gender, ethnicity, and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services (WASH strategy). • Strengthen the capacity of primary health care professionals, as well as other key sectors such as education, sanitation, environment, and social development to address social and environmental determinants and provide comprehensive care that responds to the needs of communities. • Build partnerships with a variety of social actors, such as organized civil society and patients' associations, to plan and implement integrated actions. • Highlight the importance of comprehensive actions aimed at providing health care to populations living farthest from services and moving towards NTD control and elimination. • Foment targeted actions with a One Health approach and collaboration between the health, animal health, and environmental sectors. The aim is to achieve essential integrated actions involving ecosystems, people, and animals, for the control and elimination of many NTDs. • Mobilize action and highlight the direct links between climate change and the spread of NTDs, advocating for collaboration between the environment and health sectors. • It is crucial that countries intensify and accelerate efforts to eliminate NTDs as part of PAHO's initiative to eradicate more than 30 communicable diseases and related conditions by 2030. |
| <p><u>Key messages</u></p> | <p>1. NTDs and universal health coverage / health system strengthening</p> |

Strengthen health systems by making NTDs a priority aspect of universal health coverage and of the broader health agenda, leaving no one behind and no disease neglected.

2. NTDs and climate change

Climate change will have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable communities, worsening access to water and increasing the transmission of some NTDs. Therefore, it is essential to implement mitigation and adaptation initiatives that effectively protect these communities.

3. NTDs and equity

Prioritize vulnerable populations by focusing resources and programs on those who bear the greatest burden, moving toward equity in global health. Eliminating neglected tropical diseases is a driver for greater social and economic equity, empowering communities through improved health.

4. Improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services (WASH strategy) is important for NTD elimination

Expanding adequate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services in coordination with communities is essential for NTD prevention, control, and elimination, and to ensure the use of appropriate technologies in each context.

5. One Health: an essential approach to NTD control and elimination

Many NTDs spread from animals to humans, such as rabies, fascioliasis, taeniasis/cysticercosis, Chagas disease, and leishmaniasis, among others. Therefore, it is important to focus on integrated actions with a One Health approach.

6. To ensure the sustainability of actions to control and eliminate NTDs, it is essential to involve communities

For these actions to be sustainable, it is necessary to implement person-centered interventions that foster participation and that are supported by a gender and intercultural perspective.

7. World Leprosy Day (26 January 2025)

Leprosy is a neglected tropical disease. World Leprosy Day is celebrated on the last Sunday in January. Its aim is to raise awareness about the disease and reduce the stigma against those who suffer from it. It is possible to interrupt the transmission of leprosy and eliminate the disease.

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| <p><u>Public messages</u></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More than 1.6 billion people (about 1 person in 5 in the world) are affected by neglected tropical diseases. 2. Neglected tropical diseases are preventable and treatable when detected early. Delay in seeking treatment and care can result in lifelong disability and sometimes death. 3. Everyone, everywhere, should have the information they need to prevent and treat neglected tropical diseases. 4. All people who need essential health services to prevent and treat neglected tropical diseases should have access to these services. 5. Neglected tropical diseases do not define the people who suffer from them. We all deserve respect, support, and opportunities for well-being. Together, as a community, we can break down barriers, foster acceptance, and build a future where no one is judged or excluded because of a disease. 6. Community health workers with the necessary resources can provide effective and essential health services, especially in the most remote populations. 7. Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, safe food handling, good hygiene, and reduced environmental risks can have a major impact on the prevention of neglected tropical diseases. |
| <p><u>Communication products and target audiences</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign website - all audiences • Social networking cards - general population and health professionals • Web banner - all audiences • Video with message from the director - health professionals • Press release - journalists • CDE newsletter dedicated to the campaign - internal and external PAHO audiences • Videos - health workers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Micro-planning of mass drug administration against NTDs 2. Safety of medicines for NTDs 3. Joint actions for the prevention and care of skin diseases in Paraguay 4. Experiences in leishmaniasis prevention and control in Bolivia 5. Elimination of lymphatic filariasis in Brazil 6. Experiences in the prevention, detection, and control of trachoma in Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador • Regional webinar: Stories that inspire: testimonials and solutions for neglected tropical diseases • Link to international World Leprosy Day website with communication resources. |

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| <p><u>Dissemination strategy - channels</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAHO's World NTDs Day campaign web page with information resources. • Press release distributed to the media • Social networking packages shared with communication focal points • Campaign package distributed through the CDE newsletter. |
| <p><u>Measurement and evaluation</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage (PAHO/WHO mentions) • Publications in social networks • Visits to the campaign website. |