



European Union
Statement

WHO

73th Session of the World Health Assembly
(9-14 November 2020)

Item 11.8. Neglected Tropical Diseases

Geneva, 11 November 2020

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EU Statement

Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

We appreciate opportunity for EU and its MS to cooperate with the MS of the African Group, USA and others in bringing this topic on to the agenda.

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

EU indicated from the early stage and confirms its interest in cosponsoring a decision on the agenda point.

We recognise that Neglected Tropical Diseases continue to affect the lives of the poorest populations living in under defined circumstances across almost every country. Addressing surveillance issues and supporting prevention and treatment is critical to achieving the Sustainability Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage.

We appreciate the new Road map for NTDs and we recognise and further encourage the efforts to build a strong monitoring framework to evaluate progress, not forgetting cost-effective interventions such as preventive chemotherapy coverage.

We believe that WHO and its Member States should work on removing barriers to access to care for risk populations through:

- Increasing awareness, health literacy and education on NTDs, while also actively tackling stigma, discrimination and mental health aspects of patients who suffer from them as well as survived;
- Establishing strong referral systems, particularly at community and primary care levels and cross-sectoral partnerships to tackle the NTDs and support appropriate measures and interventions integrated within the health system;
- Ensuring the timely accessibility, the availability and affordability to health systems of sufficient, appropriate and quality-assured diagnostic, treatment, vaccines and other complementary supplies
- Tackling economic, financial and in many cases long-term social burden of NTD patients and promoting effective, safe and cost-effective interventions

- Broadening the guidelines of treatment eligibility criteria for milder forms of disease when applicable and define preventive therapy e.g. deworming to decrease risks from advance NTDs-related diseases development with its complications and often functional or cognitive impairment
- Adopting a gender sensitive integrated and holistic policy approach taking into the account other diseases and sectors including WASH, Nutrition, Education and the national health system.
- Strengthening national health information systems i. a. through increased disaggregation for disease surveillance, control and for sustaining gains in elimination/eradication contexts.
- Ensure further action is taken in terms of fundamental, translational and implementation research
- Maintain and build multi-sectoral collaborative partnerships including with the private sector in order to promote a R&D agenda that addresses unanswered needs, and sustainably supply medicines and other products used for diagnostic, therapy or preventive measures and interventions to control the spread of the NTDs and towards elimination.

Thank you.