



27 January 2022, Cairo – On 30 January, the world marks “World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day” to raise awareness about neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) as a critical public health challenge so that we can progress towards their elimination. The World Health Assembly adopted the World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day unanimously last year upon a proposal from the United Arab Emirates. This year’s focus is on achieving health equity to end the neglect of poverty-related diseases and our Region wishes to emphasize the need to switch from neglect to care.

The campaign provides an opportunity to focus on the millions of people who have limited or no access to prevention, treatment and care services.

Although NTDs affects millions, yet they are preventable and treatable.. They are most common in the world’s poorest regions, where water safety, sanitation and access to health care are often inadequate. NTDs affects children, women and the elderly as well. In spite of the efforts towards elimination, the lack of funds still limits our ability to progress towards this goal .

The WHO Eastern Mediterranean suffers a high burden of NTDs. In 2019, around 77.8 million people in the Region required interventions against NTDs. Ongoing armed conflict and forced displacement of populations increase exposure, vulnerability, resurgence and persistence.

On the occasion of World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day, Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, highlighted the need to overcome these challenges and achieve elimination goals, reiterating that success is possible. “To end the suffering of many people in our Region, more attention and funding needs to be given to the most common NTDs. We must bring medicines to all those who need them, relieve the associated mental health burden, tackle fundamental human rights issues and include NTDs in essential health packages”.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region has already eliminated lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem in Egypt and Yemen, and trachoma in Oman, Morocco and the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the Region faces more than 70% of the global burden of cutaneous leishmaniasis. Lack of funds makes it more difficult for us to treat those affected and to protect them from disfigurement.

"WHO is calling on everyone, especially leaders and communities, to rally behind the goals of health equity and transform neglect into care. Only then can we achieve our vision of Health for All by All", said WHO's Regional Director.

[World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2022 website](#)

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