Investing to overcome the global impact of neglected tropical diseases

Introduction

The Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) launched the third WHO Report entitled *Investing to overcome the global impact of neglected tropical diseases* on 19 February 2015 at the seat of the Royal Society in London, United Kingdom. This global launch, lasting over 90 minutes, was simultaneously held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and linked through videoconferencing with the support of the WHO Country Office.

The Department’s decision to hold the event in the UK was in appreciation of the assistance WHO NTD received over the years from the United Kingdom Government through its Department for International Development (DFID). DFID supports the Department in strengthening its capacity in the area of health economics which has been instrumental in producing the core investment chapter of the report.

As the report makes a strong case for equitable health for all through planned domestic investment to reach Roadmap targets up to 2020 and from 2021 to 2030, staging a simultaneous launch in Addis Ababa was deemed appropriate to further advocate for the report’s key messages.

A first round of discussions in January 2015 with Dr Pierre Mpele-Kilebou, WR Ethiopia, confirmed the technical possibility for a simultaneous launch. Tests were done in late January and early February.

The recommended room for the event at the Royal Society was *The Wolfson Hall* which was appropriately staged with rows of chairs and a ‘hallway’ in the middle, as illustrated:
Two WHO printed posters of the report, a top-table and lectern were placed in the front.

Technical equipment used included:

i. a codec, with two operated cameras capturing the room and displaying images on a big screen at the far end. The two cameras were vision-mixed and the output fed into a production switcher;

ii. a switcher which connected PowerPoint files and able to send presentation materials to the far endpoint;

iii. an audio mixer which fed into audio from the far endpoint of the Public Address (PA) system, sending an audio feed into the codec enabling sound from all microphones used in the room. This mixer also incorporated input from room microphones to the PA, using existing loudspeakers;

iv. both cameras captured images and interfaced with the vision-mixer to provide multiple shots of the audience.
Pre-launch

On Monday 16 February 2015, WHO issued a media advisory, announcing the embargoed and global launch of WHO’s 3rd NTD Report on 18 & 19 February respectively. Following the media advisory, the Department received numerous requests for an advance copy of the report. A light PDF attachment of the report was sent out to about 37 journalists until Thursday 19 February.

On Wednesday, 18 February 2015, the embargoed news conference at the Palais des Nations announced the global launch, in London. Eleven journalists attended this news brief.

In the afternoon of 18 February in London, Director NTD responded to several media interview requests via telephone and in person, including interviews with BBC (Newsday) and Reuters.

BBC aired the Director’s interview repeatedly during news broadcasts.

The launch: 19 February 2015

Guests arrived at the Royal Society as from 14:30. During registration, they were handed the day’s programme and a printed copy of the report. The launch event commenced at 15:00 to a packed audience.

The London moderator, Andrew Jack (journalist with Financial Times) delivered a vibrant welcome address and briefly commented on the report. He then invited Dr Nakatani, ADG HTM, to give his remarks. The recorded video message of the Director-General was played, followed by NTD Director’s presentation which outlined the report’s investment case in a changing NTD landscape.
The Director’s presentation was followed by an address by Baroness Lindsay Northover, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development (DFID) who gave a candid account of UK’s contribution to the prevention of NTDs. She reiterated the UK government’s continued support to WHO in tackling NTDs.
The show then moved to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with a brief introduction from the moderator, Loza Tesfaye, and remarks by Dr Pierre M’Pele, WHO Representative to Ethiopia who introduced Dr Kebede Worku, State Minister of Health of Ethiopia. Dr Worku’s address highlighted the progress made by Ethiopia in tackling NTDs and the challenges that still need to be resolved.

His speech was followed by that of Dr Marie-Goretti Harakeye Ndayisaba, Head of Division, Social Affairs Department of the African Union Commission.
After Dr Ndayisaba’s remarks, the show returned to London, with Jeremy Lefroy, Member of Parliament, UK and Lord Nigel Edmund Crisp, Member of the House of Lords giving their respective speeches. A video message from Dr Tim Evans, Senior Director, Health, Nutrition and Population Global Practice, The World Bank Group was shown followed by remarks by Professor Janet Hemingway, Director, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, U.K and Emily Wainwright, Senior Operations Adviser for Neglected Tropical Diseases, United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The ‘summing up’ was from Professor Peter Holmes, Chair, NTD STAG, and principal editor of the report. At this point the panellists in Addis Ababa left the show to hold their own panel discussion.

The show in London continued with a question-and-answer session during which numerous personalities addressed the floor. The concluding remarks were made by Andrew Jack who invited everyone to join a reception in the adjoining hall. The reception ended at around 19:50.

**Partner support**

Partners supported WHO’s media outreach and contributed to Twitter messages using the hashtag #beatntds. Media coverage in Ethiopia and elsewhere in Africa has been good.

There have been at least 10 original print and many online stories in North America, Europe and Asia, along with considerable web and social media activity.

Almost all of the stories captured WHO’s main message: the need for countries endemic for NTDs to invest more to sustainably provide equitable health coverage to everyone. A few reports chose to focus on climate change and the rise in the cost to control the spread of some diseases due to
environmental changes.

Upcoming challenges are mentioned in most stories while on the whole, media coverage maintained a positive tone.

**Report launch coverage**

**NTD web - analytics**

In summary:

742 hits on 18 February 2015

1875 hits on 19 February 2015

974 hits on 20 February 2015

Compared with normal standards, this reflected a higher volume of web activity.
### How regularly do they visit the site?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course of Sessions</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Pageviews</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>244</td>
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</table>

### From where?

![Map of the world with data visualization](image)
What's their language?

![Language Distribution](chart1)

How do they reach the site?

![Reach Distribution](chart2)

If from search, which keywords they used?

<table>
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<td>(not set)</td>
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<td>world health assembly resolution on neglected tropical diseases</td>
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<tr>
<td>neglected tropical disease elephantiasis</td>
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<td>world neglected tropical disease</td>
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Which pages do they land on?

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How do visitors engage with your content?

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What are the top downloads?

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Media coverage

Broadcast


Print media

Reuters: WHO urges developing countries to fund tropical diseases fight

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/19/us-health-neglected-diseases-idUSKBN0LN07L20150219

The World Health Organization called on developing countries on Thursday to invest $1 per person per year until 2030 to tackle 17 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and improve the health and well-being of more than 1.5 billion people.

[...]

"Increased investments by national governments can alleviate human misery, distribute economic gains more evenly and free masses of people long trapped in poverty," WHO director-general Margaret Chan said in a report. The investment would represent as little as 0.1 percent of current national health spending of the low and middle-income countries affected by NTDs, the WHO said, and could also encourage international donors to increase aid.

[...]

Dirk Engels, the WHO's director of NTD control, told Reuters that while NTDs often affect the poorest people in a country, many of those nations where they are endemic are middle-income economies where growth is accelerating. "Endemic countries can play their part," he said in an interview in London. "Some endemic countries are fast developing, and as they move up the ladder they also have more means to pay for tackling NTDs."

[...]

Engels also said the devastating Ebola epidemic in West Africa in the past year highlighted to developing countries the risk of doing nothing to tackle diseases often ignored by unaffected wealthy countries. "Ebola has shown that when there is real urgency, something can be done (by foreign donors and pharmaceutical companies)," he said. "But it's also shown that maybe we shouldn't wait until it is urgent.

Devex: What not to neglect in tackling NTDs


The global health community needs an estimated $750 million annually to meet the World Health Organization's 2020 road map for the preventive treatment and care of neglected tropical diseases.
Yet meeting that target has been a struggle, according to Dirk Engels, head of WHO’s NTD department. In fact, he said, there’s currently just about $300 million in foreign aid funding available to tackle these diseases — not even half of the required sum. And given the current financial climate, especially in traditional donor countries, Engels, who is also the lead author of a new WHO report on NTDs, isn’t so optimistic that foreign aid can bridge that gap. “The development aid world is not going to withdraw from one area to fill the gap in another area. You know how it goes,” he told Devex ahead of the report’s Thursday launch.

So Engels suggested turning to innovative financing streams such as development impact bonds or performance-based financing. […] But he cautioned against limiting innovation to mobilizing resources. Further, the global health community shouldn’t fixate on targeting diseases individually, and instead focus on integrated interventions.

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation: Investing in Neglected Tropical Diseases will take more than foreign aid

While some progress has been made to combat Neglected Tropical Diseases, more people need access to preventative care and treatments, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). These diseases include leprosy, river blindness, and elephantiasis, and thrive mainly among the poorest populations. WHO is launching a new report on Thursday which makes the case for increased domestic investment to fight the 17 diseases it prioritizes. […]Dirk Engel, Director of WHO’s Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, said an additional 750 million US dollars per year until 2020 is needed to support 1.5 billion people. That money, he added, cannot only come from foreign aid.

Rappler: PH among nations with highest dengue incidence in W. Pacific

Among countries in the Western Pacific, incidence of dengue was highest in the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Australia in recent years. This was according to a report on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday, February 19, which pegged the investment cost of global vector control at $510 million annually.

Reuters: Diseases affecting the poorest can be eliminated, scientists say

It is a little known disease but it could make medical history if scientists’ predictions are correct: yaws could completely disappear by 2020, given the right resources. The only disease ever to have been eradicated is the deadly smallpox. Guinea worm is nearly there, and polio too could be added to the list.
The World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday urged developing countries to invest more in tackling so-called neglected tropical diseases such as yaws, saying more investment would alleviate human misery and free people trapped in poverty.

Also Reported by: International Business Times, Vaccine News Daily

IB Times: The Worst Diseases Around The World: Which ‘Neglected’ Illnesses And Infections Top WHO’s List?

The World Health Organization has identified 17 so-called neglected tropical diseases – viruses, bacteria and parasites that threaten an estimated 1.4 billion people around the world but don’t elicit the same global response as HIV, AIDS or Ebola. Such diseases are native to 149 countries but receive less than .1 percent of worldwide health spending, the health agency found. The WHO said Thursday that the time to extinguish these diseases is now.

Newsweek: WHO Fears Climate Change Will Accelerate Spread of Some Tropical Diseases

The World Health Organization (WHO) is seeking billions of dollars to tackle 17 tropical diseases such as dengue, rabies and leprosy, the group announced on Thursday.

In the report, Investing to Overcome the Impact of Neglected Tropical Diseases, the WHO suggests an annual investment by countries of $2.9 billion until 2020, and $1.6 billion a year from 2021 to 2030, to help the WHO tackle the diseases. The suggested investment for the next 15 years would represent 0.1 percent of current domestic spending on health in low and middle-income countries affected by tropical diseases.

NEJM: Mass Treatment with Single-Dose Azithromycin for Yaws

Mass treatment with azithromycin is a central component of the new World Health Organization (WHO) strategy to eradicate yaws. Empirical data on the effectiveness of the strategy are required as a prerequisite for worldwide implementation of the plan.

(GER) Deutsche Welle: Blind, entstellt oder gar tödlich: Tropenkrankheiten
http://www.dw.de/blind-entstellt-oder-gar-t%C3%B6dlich-tropenkrankheiten/a-18268095

Nach wie vor leiden Millionen Menschen unter tropischen Krankheiten - die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung ganzer Regionen ist behindert. Die Weltgesundheitsorganisation will nun mehr dagegen tun.

(GER) Tageblatt.lu: Milliarden gegen tropische Krankheiten
http://www.tageblatt.lu/nachrichten/story/Milliarden-gegen-tropische-Krankheiten-14263401

Viele tropische Krankheiten machen blind, entstellen und verstümmeln ihre Opfer. Und sie behindern die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung ganzer Regionen. Mehr als eine Milliarde Menschen in 149 Ländern leiden unter einer oder mehreren der 17 als "vernachlässigt" geltenden tropischen Krankheiten. Darauf macht die Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO) in einem am Donnerstag veröffentlichten Bericht aufmerksam.

Um die Schlafkrankheit, Flussblindheit, Bilharziose sowie eine Reihe anderer von Parasiten oder Würmern verursachte Tropenkrankheiten nachhaltig eindämmen zu können, seien größere
Anstrengungen als bisher erforderlich, erklärte WHO-Generaldirektorin Margaret Chan. Allein bis 2020 werden nach Schätzungen der UN-Sonderorganisation insgesamt rund 16 Milliarden Dollar benötigt (14,1 Milliarden Euro), bis 2030 seien es 32 Milliarden Dollar.

(FRE) La Presse.ca: Appel de l’OMS pour investir dans la prévention des maladies tropicales rares
http://www.lapresse.ca/international/201502/19/01-4845455-appel-de-loms-pour-investir-dans-la-prevention-des-maladies-tropicales-rares.php
L’Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) a demandé jeudi à ses pays membres d’engager plus de fonds dans la lutte contre les maladies tropicales rares, qui touchent 1,5 milliard de personnes dans le monde.
À l’occasion d’un rapport sur la lutte contre ces «maladies tropicales négligées», au nombre de 17, l’OMS rappelle que ces affections peuvent causer des cécités, des défigurations, des invalidités, voire la mort, et ceci dans les pays les pauvres de la planète. Environ 500 000 personnes décèdent chaque année des suites de ces maladies.
Selon le Dr Margaret Chan, directrice générale de l’OMS, augmenter les investissements publics «peut soulager la misère humaine, répartir plus équitablement les profits, et de libérer les masses condamnées depuis longtemps à la pauvreté».

Ethiopian Reporter: “WHO urges burden countries to increase domestic investment to fight NTDs”

Launching the third report on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) on Thursday in Geneva, London and Addis Ababa concurrently, the World Health Organization (WHO) urged burden countries to generate domestic investment in order to realize the Roadmap goals of eliminating most NTDs by 2020.
Ethiopia in this regard will find itself in the forefront to insure a full-fledge implementation of its health master plan launched in 2013, according to Kebede Worku (MD), state minister of Ministry of Health. “We are well aware of the situation and we will continue to overcome the problem of NTDs within our comprehensive health master plan of post 2015MDGs,” he said.

APA: “Ethiopia: WHO urges increased investments to contain NTDs”

The World Health Organization (WHO) has urged world governments to scale up investment tailored to tackling 17 Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) worldwide. The burden of NTDs remains a serious health challenge in Africa affecting more than one hundred million people, while Nigeria, South Sudan and Ethiopia are the most affected ones. Speaking at the launching of the report in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on Thursday, the African Union Representative in the country said 50 cents will be needed for an Africa to eliminate NTDs from the continent over the next 15 years.

Ethiopian Herald: “WHO urges governments to increase investment to tackle neglected tropical diseases”

The World Health Organization (WHO) urges affected countries to scale up their investment in tackling 17 neglected tropical diseases in order to improve the health and well-being of more than
1.5 billion people, yesterday here at the United Nations Conference Hall. This investment would represent as little as 0.1 per cent of current domestic expenditure on health in affected low and middle income countries for the period 2015-2030.

Links to other news stories:

4. http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/19/us-health-disease-eradication-idUSKBN0LN1I420150219
16. http://article.wn.com/view/2015/02/20/Will_the_SDGs_be_the_last_hope_for_lost_causes/

Social media (Twitter)

Hashtag: #beatntds

There have been over 2400 tweets with the hashtag #beatntds, with over 1800 tweets from 19 February.
Sightsavers Policy @Sightsavers_Pol 17m 17 minutes ago
Great to hear such strong support from Dr Moeti @WHO on the importance of addressing #Equity to #BeatNTDs
Sightsavers Policy @Sightsavers_Policy 18m 18 minutes ago
Dr Moeti @WHO joining the #Uniting from Brazzaville : we are working to strengthen voice of #NTDs in SDG Financing for Development talks

CBM UK @CBMUK 15m 15 minutes ago
Neglected tropical diseases cause blindness, #disability, death. @WHO: Action needed now to #BeatNTDs http://who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/neglected-tropical-diseases/en/ ... #LetsSaveLives

DSW @dsw_worldwide 28m 28 minutes ago
R&D should be driven not just by markets, but by need, says @WHO report on #NTDs #LetsSaveLives #BeatNTDsv

Sightsavers @Sightsavers 34m 34 minutes ago
Yesterday @WHO lifted the lid on what's needed to #beatNTDs & end suffering caused by #trachoma and #riverblindness http://www.sightsavers.org/governments-must-increase-investment-eliminate-diseases/ ...

Helen Hamilton @HelenCHamilton 34m 34 minutes ago
@WHO objective for NTDs in #SDGs - an #NTD specific target in #post2015 and #NTDs included as a tracer for #UHC monitoring #BeatNTDs

Helen Hamilton @HelenCHamilton 46m 46 minutes ago
Next up - Christopher Fitzpatrick from @WHO is highlighting what a #UHC approach means for #NTDs. #post2015 #BeatNTDs

Helen Hamilton @HelenCHamilton 40m 40 minutes ago
One of the @WHO proposed targets for NTDs - by 2030 90% fewer people in need of prevention for #NTDs

Hashtag users

I. https://twitter.com/hashtag/beatntds
II. https://twitter.com/rtifightsntds
III. https://twitter.com/NTDworld
IV. http://www.scoopnest.com/tag/BeatNTDs/
V. https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/beatntds
VI. https://www.linkedin.com/company/american-leprosy-missions
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XI. https://twitter.com/cctvnewsafrika/status/568768281110315008
Alicia Dauth This is a constant reminder of what the world is really like for those who are not fortunate enough to live in a "bubble" like I do. I showed these pictures to my 4 year old, I discussed every picture with her, what they mean and the story behind it, they must learn from a young age that this is real life and that we can help make other peoples lives better.
A video of the launch event will be posted on the NTD website soon. Production depends on resources and editing facilities available in WHO’s audio video studio.