

**REQUEST BY NON-STATE ACTORS TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT AT THE HYBRID
SESSION OF THE SEVENTY-SECOND REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

Non-State actors participating, either in person or virtually, in the hybrid session of the Seventy-second Regional Committee for Africa and wishing to make a statement, must submit the complete form hereunder to the Secretariat not later than one week prior to the start date of the session that is **by 15 August 2022**.

Oral statements should not be more than one-minute long, while written statements should not be longer than 600 words. Each statement should focus on technical issues and should be directly relevant to both the agenda item under which it is presented and to the document prepared for the item. The statement should not raise issues of a political nature that are unrelated to the agenda item and should not contain any inappropriate or offensive reference to Member States. While there should not be reference to any individual Member States, or areas of Member States, it is recalled that nomenclature must follow that of the United Nations.

The Chairperson of the Regional Committee shall decide whether to accept or reject a statement in light of its relevance to the discussion, compliance with the time and word limits and the rules stated above. During the meeting, the Chairperson of the Regional Committee shall decide whether to grant a non-State actor the right to present an oral statement in light of time constraints or any other reason. Written statements admitted shall be published on the Regional Committee webpage for a limited time period and will not be retained thereafter.

**Request by non-State actors to submit a written or oral statement at the hybrid session of the
Seventy-second Regional Committee for Africa**

Name and acronym of non-State actor (in English, French or Portuguese):

Drugs for Neglected Diseases *Initiative* (DNDi)

Written statement

Oral statement

Name of person delivering the statement

Dr. Monique Wasunna

Modality of participation: In person Virtual

Agenda item (number, title): **Agenda item 10: Framework for the integrated control, elimination and eradication of tropical and vector-borne diseases in the African Region 2022–2030**

Statement (in English, French or Portuguese):

DNDi supports this consolidated framework which builds on the progress made in the last two decades. As a not-for-profit research and development (R&D) organization, DNDi focuses these comments on how the framework can leverage on innovation of and equitable access to the health tools necessary to alleviate suffering and reduce morbidity and mortality from neglected diseases and other emerging infectious diseases, leaving no one behind.

Despite the progress, we urge Member States to take concrete action and commit to meet the set targets aimed at an “African Region free of tropical and vector-borne diseases that affect human health”.

- **Comments on Issues and Challenges:** DNDi supports the issues and challenges in this framework and welcomes the inclusion of “Inadequate research and imperfect failing tools” we recommend that this statement be expanded to include “inadequate [add **investment** in research, **innovation and access**] and imperfect failing tools”. This is pivotal since there is need for increased investment to conduct research

and further develop innovative new tools for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment that are simple, safe, effective and accessible – and that can be easily integrated into already overburdened health systems.

- **Comments on Objectives:** DNDi supports the vision, goal, objectives, milestones and targets as described in the document. For objective (b) “Support the scaling up of implementation of targeted, integrated tropical and vector-borne disease interventions”, we recognize that prior to scaling up, there is need to develop interventions that are country, regional and context specific. We recommend that objective (b) be expanded to read as “Support the [add development] and scaling up...”
- **Comments on Guiding Principles:** DNDi recognizes and supports the principle no. **28. Whole-of-society approach** and stakeholders listed. We recommend the need to include **research institutions, youth, and faith-based institutions.**

In addition, we urge Member States to take note of the following:

- **Address the impact of COVID-19:** As noted in this framework, the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions have significantly disrupted essential services and activities for NTDs, globally. Emerging threats such as climate change will lead to increased infectious diseases that impact the health of the most vulnerable. In an effort to achieve the SDGs, there is need to prioritize and address the needs of the most neglected populations, despite the focus on pandemics and shifts in funding. NTDs are a litmus test of quality universal health coverage and the basis of health security. This calls for political commitment and concerted action to implement the framework while responding to COVID-19 and preparing for future pandemics.
- **Invest in research and innovation in new drugs and diagnostics:** Current tests and treatments for most NTDs have serious limitations that can cause morbidity or mortality. New and better diagnostic tests are needed as well as safer, effective, affordable and more patient friendly treatments; It is key to ensure gaps are addressed such as treatments for children, pregnant and breastfeeding women; shorter, simple regimens that can avoid the need for hospitalization and support UHC; Explore sustainable procurement and access strategies for new tools; and leverage and expand the scientific, technical, programmatic and human capacity within the countries affected by NTDs, and in support of cross-cutting strategies.
- **Sustainable resource mobilization is key to make sustained investments.** Member States should prioritize domestic funding mechanisms, particularly given the actual or proposed cuts to donor funding of current programmes.

At DNDi, we commit to do our part to end the neglect and support the Framework and the WHO NTD Roadmap by;

- Delivering at least 13 life-saving new treatments.
- Joining key stakeholders to prioritize on R&D and strengthen south-south and regional collaborations.
- Advocating for change and influencing public policies.

Name: <u>Dr. Monique Wasunna</u>
Position: <u>Director</u>
Date: <u>August 17, 2022</u>