



MSF Statement on Agenda Item 14.4 - Road Map for Neglected Tropical Diseases 2021–2030
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Speaker: Francisco Viegas

MSF has been providing direct care to patients with neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) for more than 30 years. NTDs almost exclusively affect people living in extreme poverty. Due to the lack of attention by pharmaceutical companies, there are no vaccines, limited diagnostic tools, and treatments that are far from optimal and often unavailable or unaffordable for many of these deadly and debilitating diseases.

We welcome the second road map for NTDs by the World Health Organization, as it is an opportunity to offer essential health services to billions of people affected by NTDs. The new roadmap now includes 20 priority NTDs—more than the previous edition. This represents significant progress, although other neglected diseases, such as noma, should be added too.

However, the COVID pandemic has meant that many NTD programmes have been disrupted for over two years now, threatening progress towards the control and elimination of NTDs. Fragile health systems are under further strain, and there are alarming indications that resources for NTDs will be diverted, and funding reduced, particularly for life-threatening NTDs requiring intensive case management, such as snakebite envenoming and visceral leishmaniasis. There is a real risk that NTDs could slide into further neglect, reversing the significant achievements of the past years, and claim even more lives.

MSF therefore calls on WHO member states to work towards the ambitious targets of the NTD roadmap, and to provide adequate resources to achieve them.

Despite the challenges, we can overcome the neglect. With commitments, funds and more research to develop better tools to find, diagnose and treat patients, we can make NTDs diseases of the past.