

ADVOCACY GUIDE

CAMPAIGNING FOR AN
AFRICA FREE OF NTDs

ADVOCACY ALLIES



SpeakUpAfrica.

NO NEGLECTED
TO TROPICAL
DISEASES

YOUR ADVOCACY ALLIES

BUILDING SUPPORT WITHIN GOVERNMENT

It comes as no surprise that the support of your government ministries and agencies is key to the success of your NTD program. The political environment and competition for government resources require a consistent targeted campaign of advocacy for government actors to support the NTD program. It is especially difficult sometimes to engage the interest of the government when other diseases, such as HIV, TB and malaria, occupy a centre stage both globally and nationally. And while the Ministry of Health is a natural partner, it is important to seek the support of other ministries and agencies as well.

Political will among affected countries to control, eliminate and eradicate NTDs has increased in the last five years. This has been extraordinarily helpful in the progress being made in a number of African countries. However, tapping into that political will can be a challenge for even the most active NTD program manager.

Political decisions are made differently depending on the nature of the state, politics, and media. In some places, the legislature has more authority. In other places, the Minister of Finance dominates policymaking. Countries have different levels of freedom and access to the public sector.

Overall, advocacy with government officials at the national or subnational level aims to ensure adequate and sustained political and financial commitment for the NTD Program. The development of ties within the state apparatus will likely require advocacy efforts towards the following, among others:



Parliamentary health and budgetary committees to provide funding and support to NTD programs.



Ministry of Finance (Planning Commission/ Division) to ensure timely and adequate release of funds for NTD activities.



The Ministry of Information/Communication (or equivalent) to encourage state-owned broadcasting organizations to develop special programmes around NTD issues and events.



The Ministry of Education to incorporate a strong NTD component in its primary and secondary school health curricula.



The Ministry of Women's Affairs to mobilize women and incorporate information about NTD treatment and prevention in their service delivery.



DRC now provides **25%** of funding for its NTD programs, up from 0% in 2011¹



Tanzania's national government accounts for more than **40%** of total spending on NTD programs²



The Sudanese government allocated over **\$1.5 MILLION** to NTD projects in 2016³

With support from ESPEN and modest domestic investments, health ministries can achieve universal healthcare, strengthen health systems and build integrated approaches to advance NTD control and elimination goals, to protect the most vulnerable communities from five devastating diseases and improve millions of lives.

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti
Regional Director for WHO Africa

01• WHO Fourth Report, Page 130.

02• WHO Fourth Report, Page 130.

03• WHO Fourth Report, Page 131.

Your advocacy effort at the highest level of government, including the office of the head of state, should demonstrate how strengthening the country's NTD effort will help the country meet its international commitments with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs, which the UN General Assembly passed, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. African governments have embraced the SDGs, and many countries are making significant progress in reaching their targets.

In specific, the SDGs include a call to end the epidemic of NTDs by the year 2030, and high-level government officials will likely want to insure the international community that the government is living up to its commitments. It will also be important to illustrate to government officials how investments made toward reaching the NTD elimination goal make the achievement of the goal of Universal Health Coverage more affordable. Eliminating illness and disabilities of NTDs will reduce the costs of hospitalization to health systems and individuals, thus equating to a reduction of expenditures to achieve Universal Health Coverage. The NTD elimination effort also closely relates to the SDGs established for clean water supplies and sanitation.

The yearly Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDG progress⁸ provides your government with the opportunity to showcase its actions and achievements toward reaching the goal of ending NTDs. As part of your NTD advocacy intervention, you can target government officials with messaging around the international commitment to review the progress towards eliminating NTDs and highlight the country's successes.

In addition to demonstrating progress on the SDGs, your advocacy effort can use the ALMA scorecard to promote sustained political will for NTD elimination. In January 2018, at the 30th African Union summit, 30 heads of states belonging to the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) added neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) to its annual scorecard on disease progress.

By adding NTDs to the scorecard, African leaders made a public commitment to hold themselves accountable for progress on these diseases and put NTDs alongside malaria and maternal and child health as top health priorities for the continent.

NTD progress index for the ALMA scorecard, which can be found at <http://unitingtocombatntds.org/africa/>, provides an overview of each country's progress in reaching people in need of mass treatment and country-specific recommendations on improving performance. The criteria established for the scorecard are monitored every 3 months to track progress and identify bottlenecks. The index also ranks country progress, allowing each Head of State to compare a country's standing on NTD progress compared to other African countries. The scorecard is personally reviewed by African heads of state every year.

⁰⁸ Visit the *Uniting to Combat NTDs* website to see when your country undergoes a review <http://unitingtocombatntds.org/vnrs/voluntary-national-reviews-2018/>



We intend to establish and fully fund the Neglected Tropical Diseases program to enable us to meet the ambitious yet attainable targets of eliminating these diseases, together with other low burden countries in the Southern African Region by 2023.

H.E Slumber Tsogwane

Vice President of the Republic of Botswana



Domestic resource mobilization in Burkina Faso



Burkina Faso provides a good example of the power of domestic support. In a 10-year period (2004–2014), Burkina Faso's government provided US\$ 300,000– 400,000 per year to support their NTD programme costs. In 2016, the programme was assisted with a World Bank loan, to cover per diems and other expenses for community mobilization, monitoring and evaluation. Today, Burkina Faso, with the support of USAID and UK aid, has achieved nearly 90% coverage of its population at risk with MDA.

Source: Uniting to Combat NTDs, 5th Progress Report



In **Uganda**, for instance, the Ugandan Inter-religious Council (UIRC) has been active in lobbying government for improved health policies.



The **Nigerian** Inter-faith Action Association (NIFAA) has mobilized Christian and Muslim leaders to engage religious communities in the fight against malaria as well as other diseases and poverty and obtained funding from the World Bank in support of their program.



In **Mauritania**, on the other hand, which is a predominately Muslim country, the National Association of Imams plays a similar role.



At the Global Citizen Festival Mandela 100 Festival, celebrated in South Africa on December 2, 2019, Mozambique committed US\$ 6 million allocation to the NTD program for the schistosomiasis mapping exercise and increased coverage of soil-transmitted helminths.

Engaging the Private Sector

Advocacy with private sector businesses can potentially yield important in-kind and monetary dividends to your country's effort to end NTDs. Advocacy with the private sector may also target businesses to adopt workplace policies and other actions that seek to protect employees from NTDs.

In other public health interventions such as malaria prevention, companies have often promoted prevention in communities where they have investments, but companies can also be encouraged to do so on a wider, even national scale. In some countries, telecoms have been important supporters of public health campaigns providing resources and free services, such as SMS messaging, to support campaign objectives. Both small and large businesses can be important contributors to the campaign to end NTDs, irrespective of whether they work independently or partner with international organizations, national governments or non-governmental organizations.

In inviting the private sector to become a partner to end NTDs, appeals to action can be made directly to businesses or through their membership with business associations, as well as through service organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs. Some Ministries of Health already have in place cooperative Memoranda of Understanding with private sector firms for public health intervention that the NTD elimination campaign can build upon. Often large firms will have dedicated staff to further a business's good corporate citizenship goals as well as foundations through which they channel donations. **Private sector representatives can be invited to become members of the NTD Partners' Coalition providing support to the NTD program's advocacy effort.**

In approaching businesses, foundations and related associations, it is good practice to be prepared with fact sheets and/or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that can be handed out to their representatives. This supporting documentation must convincingly make the case why participation in a campaign, or more generally the effort to eliminate NTDs, is in the interest of their firms, the economy and society as a whole.

In approaching the private sector, it is important to remind business leaders of the goodwill they can generate with the public by fulfilling their commitment to good corporate citizenship. Business leaders will need to know how their support will be acknowledged. Such acknowledgements may include company logos on campaign printed material or credits on video and radio public service announcements. The advocacy team may also work with a company to send press releases to journalists and news outlets to generate coverage of private sector support to specific interventions or broader efforts towards elimination of NTDs.



**THE FIVE MOST COMMON NTDs
CAN BE TREATED FOR LESS THAN
US\$ 0.50 PERSON, PER YEAR**

NTD PARTNERS' COALITION IN A NUTSHELL

What is a Coalition?

A coalition is a group of organizations, companies or individuals that “commit to a common purpose and share decision making to influence an external target.”¹ Forming an advocacy coalition is an important stride, or interim outcome, in seeking change. However, creating a coalition cannot achieve the advocacy objective alone and the coalition must be part of and implement a comprehensive advocacy strategy to shape policy and/or funding.

Why are Coalitions Critical for Advocacy?

Advocacy and coalition building are essential aspects of improving the policy and funding environment for successful and sustainable long-term health programs. Advocacy can raise awareness of important, yet neglected, issues and can encourage greater political commitment for necessary programs that leads to increased resources. While this guidance focuses on creating NTD Partners' Coalition, it may make sense in some settings to engage with currently established coalitions to take up a NTD agenda, rather than create a separate coalition to influence policy or funding.

Pros and Cons of Forming an Advocacy Coalition²

Pros

- Increases your base of support so you can achieve more together than alone
- Pools organizational financial and human resources
- Enhances credibility and legitimacy
- Facilitates coordination, information sharing, and collaboration
- Develops new leadership and technical skills among members
- Creates collaboration and relationships with new organizations and key actors
- Builds support, encouragement, and motivation

Cons

- Agreeing on common objectives can be difficult
- One organization or person may dominate
- Action can be slow because of additional processes and consensus
- Recognition may go to the coalition rather than an individual or organization

- Seeking consensus or “common ground” with a unified voice may overlook the asks of individual organizations
- Time-consuming

Who Should Be Involved?

- Ministry of Health and National NTD Control Programme
- Ministry of Finance - Health Officer
- Actors outside of the Health Sector as relevant in the country context
- Civil Society and NGOs
- Private Sector and related industries that are affected by NTDs
- Donors and financial partners, including UN Agencies
- Faith-based organizations.



Agriculture



Education



Environment



Housing


Water and
Sanitation

What Could Be Done Within the Coalition?

- Establishment of a national NTD Day.
- Identification of opportunities for outreach or events where decision makers can be targeted, such as strategic planning meetings, World Health Day, National NTD Day, etc.
- Identification of partners to undertake specific actions with the required levels of funding.
- Engagement of champions, members of parliament and corporate executives through NTD themed symposiums or networking lunches.
- Development of targeted media opportunities or op-eds led by champions to highlight success and gaps.
- Identification of opportunities for corporate engagement and the development of proposals that define how corporations can contribute to NTD programming.

01• (http://www.mcf.org/system/article_resources/0000/1297/What_Makes_an_Effective_Coalition.pdf)

02• Adapted from the International HIV/AIDS Alliance’s Training Package for Advocacy Strategy Development

Companies may be inclined to make financial donations to the NTD elimination effort. There are many examples of corporate giving by multinational corporations to reduce, for instance, malaria's impact. For instance, BHP Billiton, through its foundation, Sustainable Communities, provided the Global Fund with USD 30 million (26,1 million Euros) over five years to support malaria prevention, diagnosis and treatment in Mozambique⁹.

The petroleum giant, Chevron, supported the malaria programme implemented by Angola's Ministry of Health with a USD 5 million (4.6 million Euros) donation to the Global Fund¹⁰. The petroleum company, Esso Angola, gave USD 4 million (3.7 million Euros) to support malaria projects in Angola through grants from the ExxonMobil Foundation. These grants were given to USAID on condition that the President's Malaria Initiative use the funds to fight malaria in Angola¹¹.

Engaging Religious Leaders

Religious leaders are potentially important allies in your advocacy effort. Indeed, there are many examples of national religious organizations taking on the cause of health improvement for the benefit of their own followers and more generally for society. Religious leaders should be invited to become NTD champions, using their influence with political figures and government officials to adopt sound policies and to adequately fund NTD elimination. Religious organizations may host advocacy events with political, governmental and private sector leaders such as an advocacy lunch where participants will learn about the NTD elimination effort and will be asked to take action in support of the NTD program goals and activities. There is also the potential for national religious institutions to secure their own funding from international donors, which may be used in support of social mobilization for NTD elimination, by enhancing their ability to leverage congregations and social welfare organizations in support of behaviour change communication and campaign roll outs.

In the area of social mobilization and behaviour change communication, religious institutions may:

- Help local people understand what NTDs are and why they contribute to poverty
- Encourage local people to have confidence in treatment offered by Ministries of health
- Encourage local people's demand for treatment and services

How religious organizations function at the national level varies among countries. Some are interfaith in character.

09• www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2014-03-26_Mozambique_Aims_to_Reach_Universal_Malaria_Protection_in_2014/

10• www.theglobalfund.org/en/blog/2012-07-02_The_Global_Fund,_Angola_and_Chevron_together_against_malaria/;

11• www.pmi.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/malaria-operational-plans/fy16/fy-2016-angola-malaria-operational-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=6; www.usaid.gov/angola/angola-celebrates-world-malaria-day; oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/audit-reports/4-654-12-006-p.pdf.



CASE STUDY

Rotary International's commitment to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs

Rotary is an international community service organization with clubs on six continents. Rotarians are well positioned to bring leaders and stakeholders together to shape visions into productive action. Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation are well known for their leading role in the global initiative to eradicate polio. In addition to this «corporate» cause, Rotarians have been key players in other health efforts such as safe water and malaria control.

Rotary International and Rotary Foundation have taken up WASH as one of its signature causes, and because of the close connection with NTD elimination and WASH objectives, Rotarians in your country may be highly receptive to become NTD partners.

According to Rotary International, it has partnered with the United States Agency for International Development in Ghana, Madagascar, and Uganda to implement sustainable, long-term programs to improve water supplies, sanitation, and hygiene. Rotary has challenged its members to develop sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene education projects in five countries: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, India, and Kenya. The Rotary Foundation has invested in more than 1,000 WASH projects in more than 100 countries. Through grants from the Rotary Foundation and fundraising by Rotary clubs, its volunteers have supported water purification, hygiene education, latrine construction, and waste management.

For more, see: <https://www.rotary.org/en/our-causes/providing-clean-water>