

ADVOCACY GUIDE

**CAMPAIGNING FOR AN
AFRICA FREE OF NTDs**

USEFUL RESOURCES



SpeakUpAfrica.

NO NEGLECTED
TO TROPICAL
DISEASES

USEFUL RESOURCES

Policy Briefs

A policy brief is a very important tool in your NTD advocacy efforts. The policy brief targets the decision-maker, whether at the national level or sub-national level, and is the preferred form of communication favoured by policy actors. Research shows that 79% of policy actors from both developing and developed countries rated policy briefs as a 'key tool' for making decisions¹².

The objective of your policy brief is to advocate for a change in policy—from a budget request to a change in the country's health policy concerning NTDs. It is important to keep in mind the audience for your policy brief. Officials in the Ministry of Finance will expect a policy brief that focuses on issues related to budgets, costs and other financial issues. At the Ministry of Health, officials will respond to the public health issues around NTDs.

The position of the official is also important. Technical staff will respond to evidence-based arguments. At higher levels of the government, a policy brief should lay out the policy options—keeping in mind the political realities and the competing narratives.

Policy briefs should be no more than two-pages. There is a useful five-step framework for writing a policy brief for a public health issue:

STEP 1	What is the context, who are the stakeholders and influential actors? What is the problem and what are the choices to be made?
STEP 2	What are the reasonable and feasible options? What are the attributes and tradeoffs for each alternative?
STEP 3	Given the information about each alternative or strategy described above, what are the expected outcomes of each of the choices? Which would appear to be the most efficient option?
STEP 4	What are the decision-making criteria? What are the outcomes most valued by the decision-maker or stakeholder (e.g. improving health, reducing risk, promoting equity)? What are the political realities and what are the competing narratives?
STEP 5	Make a recommendation for a specific action to be taken

¹² See Nicola Jones and Cora Walsh, *Policy briefs as a communication tool for development research* (Overseas Development Institute: 2008).

POLICY BRIEF: LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a neglected tropical disease (NTD). Infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes. Infection is usually acquired in childhood causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system.

When lymphatic filariasis develops into chronic conditions it leads to lymphoedema (tissue swelling) or elephantiasis (skin/tissue thickening) of limbs and hydrocele (scrotal swelling). Involvement of breasts and genital organs is common. Such body deformities often lead to social stigma and sub-optimal mental health, loss of income-earning opportunities and increased medical expenses for patients and their caretakers. The socioeconomic burdens of isolation and poverty are immense.



LF KEY FACTS

- Lymphatic filariasis impairs the lymphatic system and can lead to the abnormal enlargement of body parts, causing pain, severe disability and social stigma.
- 856 million people in 52 countries worldwide remain threatened by lymphatic filariasis and require preventive chemotherapy to stop the spread of this parasitic infection.
- In 2000 over 120 million people were infected, with about 40 million disfigured and incapacitated by the disease.
- 499 million people no longer require preventive chemotherapy due to successful implementation of WHO strategies.



THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S (WHO) RESPONSE

World Health Assembly resolution WHA50.29 encourages Member States to eliminate lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem. In response, WHO launched its Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF) in 2000. In 2012, the WHO neglected tropical diseases roadmap reconfirmed the target date for achieving elimination by 2020.

WHO's strategy is based on 2 key components:

- Stopping the spread of infection through large-scale annual treatment of all eligible people in an area or region where infection is present; and
- Alleviating the suffering caused by lymphatic filariasis through provision of the recommended basic package of care.



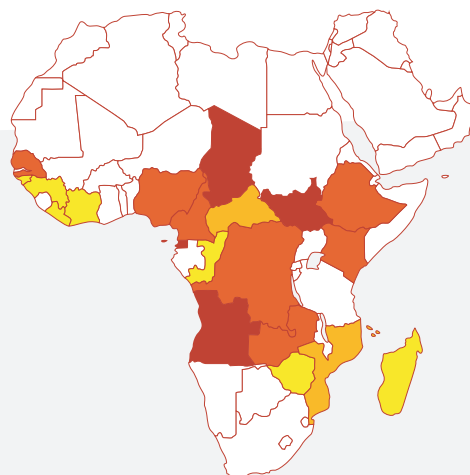
GLOBAL PROGRAM SUCCESSES

- From 2000 to 2016, 6.7 billion treatments were delivered to more than 850 million people at least once in 66 countries, considerably reducing transmission in many places.
- The population requiring MDA has declined by 36% (499 million) where infection prevalence has been reduced below elimination thresholds.
- The overall economic benefit of the programme during 2000-2007 is conservatively estimated at US\$ 24 billion
- Preventive chemotherapy is still required in 52 countries but has not been delivered to all endemic areas as of the end of 2017.



LF ELIMINATION: PROGRESS IN AFRICA¹

An unprecedented effort of mapping NTDs in the African Region has narrowed the scope of LF endemicity. Among the 35 countries originally considered endemic, an estimated 395.3 million persons are currently considered to require MDA. Based on data reported from 20 countries, 176.5 million persons were reported covered in MDA for a regional coverage of 44.7%, representing an 18% increase from 2014. MDA scale-up as observed in 2015 compared to 2014 is encouraging for Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zambia, highlighting the many examples of success with MDA in the region.



- MDA scale-up as observed in 2015 compared to 2014
- Rapid scale-up of MDA to all endemic IUs is still required
- MDA needs to start urgently
- MDA was also required but not implemented



LEVERAGING THE BENEFITS OF LF TREATMENT

LF medications provide effective prevention of and treatment for several medically important intestinal helminth (parasitic worm) infections. For example, one medication used to treat LF, albendazole, also treats hookworm, roundworm, and whipworm infections. Prevention of and treatment for these infections (also NTDs), contribute to greater productivity and better quality of life by protecting children from cognitive impairment, anemia, and malnourishment.



RECOMMENDATIONS

In support of the global program, countries and partners are encouraged to:



Continue and scale-up MDA programs;



Develop and implement strategies to accelerate the elimination of LF;



Increase efforts to provide disease management for persons with LF;



Wherever possible, integrate LF programs to deliver services for other NTDs and diseases.

01• WHO's Weekly Epidemiological Record, 20 September 2016

PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint is a widely used software application that provides visual content for presentations. As the NTD program manager, it is important to use the presentation platform to increase awareness, create partnerships and advocate for resources. Creating good PowerPoint presentations can be challenging—so much so that there is a syndrome called “death by PowerPoint.” However, by following a few simple guidelines, your PowerPoint can be a useful advocacy tool.

- 1** Simplicity is best. Create a template with your NTD logo/graphics for brand recognition. Be consistent with font, colors and background.
- 2** Limit the number of words on each slide. The text should not be the content of your presentation. Use key phrases and only essential information.
- 3** Limit punctuation and using capital letters.
- 4** Don't overuse special effects.
- 5** Use good quality photos and simple graphics.
- 6** Limit the number of slides.
- 7** Don't read your slides.

It is most efficient to develop a basic presentation that can be adapted for different purposes and different audiences. Keep in mind your audience. An audience of technical experts will expect technical information about the program. For a non-technical audience, it is more important to present the big picture along with results and desired actions.

Press Releases

The press release is a direct communication to the news media about an event, a milestone or a result in your NTD program. The press release has a standard format and goes out to the media as an announcement. There are a number of ways to disseminate your press release.

You can send it to your local newspapers, radio stations and television stations, targeting the Editor or Managing Editor. You can also send it electronically to websites hosted by partner organization and other websites that focus on public health issues.

The timing of your press release is important. If you are sending it electronically to an Editor, you will get more attention if you send it out at 9:08 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m., which may get lost at the top of the hour. It is also a good idea to include a high-quality photo to accompany the press release.

Here is a template for writing a press release:

[Print on your letterhead with your logo and address]

[ORGANIZATION NAME]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Day, Month, Year

Contact Name:

Mobile

Email address

HEADLINE

[example: Campaign Launched to Eliminate NTDs]

Sub-headline: No to NTDs Campaign Will Meet Elimination Target by 2020

City, State (Date) – One (maybe two) sentences that summarize the whole story. If the reader gets no further, they will know what this story is about.

“Follow up with a quote as soon as possible,” the Prime Minister said at the launch of the new government campaign to eliminate neglected tropical diseases held at the Sheraton Hotel on May 21, 2018. If the quote is attributed to the same person introduced in the first paragraph, just use their last name and don’t repeat the title.

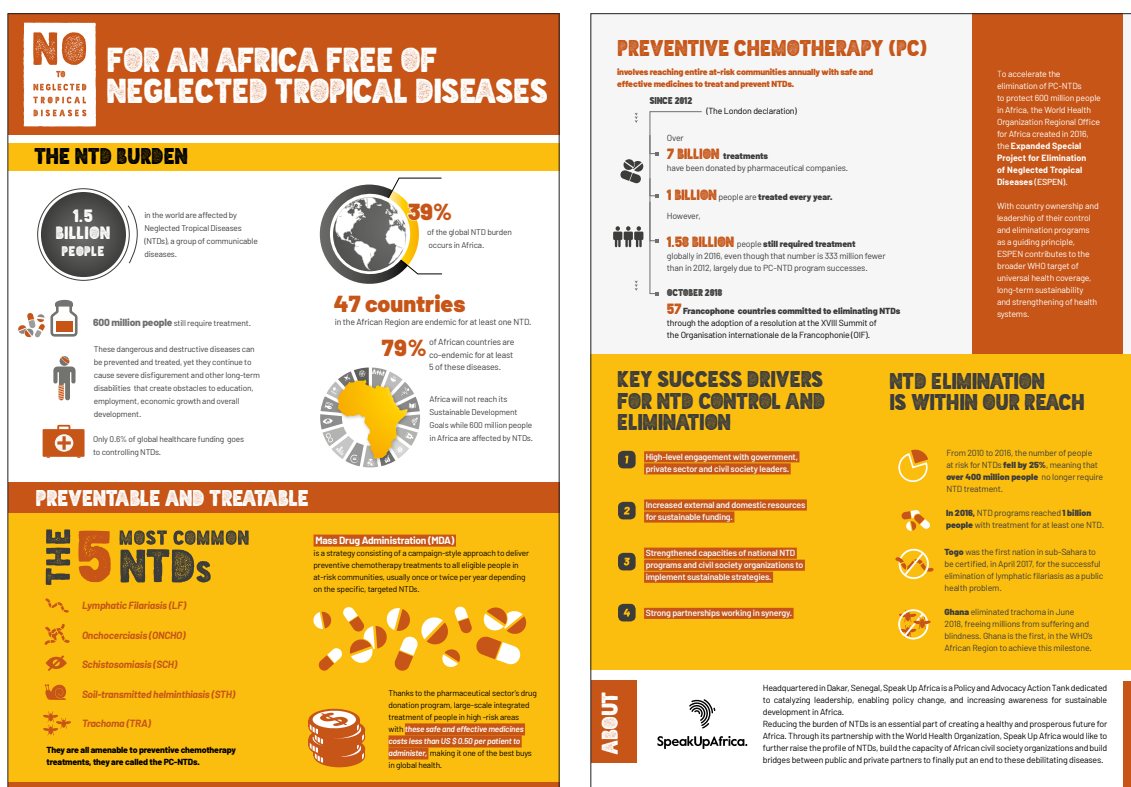
Support what you said in the first paragraphs with more about why this article is relevant and any facts to back it up and make the point stronger.

If the release goes to a second page, make that known by writing ... MORE at the bottom of the page.

Advocacy Tools

The Program should prepare advocacy tools to be given to champions and other public figures. Such tools should contain written material, such as talking points and factsheets.

In addition to written material, the advocacy materials could include visual such as the campaign t-shirt/ cap/apron, posters and other visual aids that the leaders can display in and around their offices. The use of such items helps them to demonstrate their commitment to, and involvement with the effort to end NTDs.



Advocacy Events

In organizing public advocacy events for government officials, their own public relations staff must be involved throughout the planning process to ensure their effective and efficient involvement during the implementation of communication activities as well as to ensure that established protocols are followed.

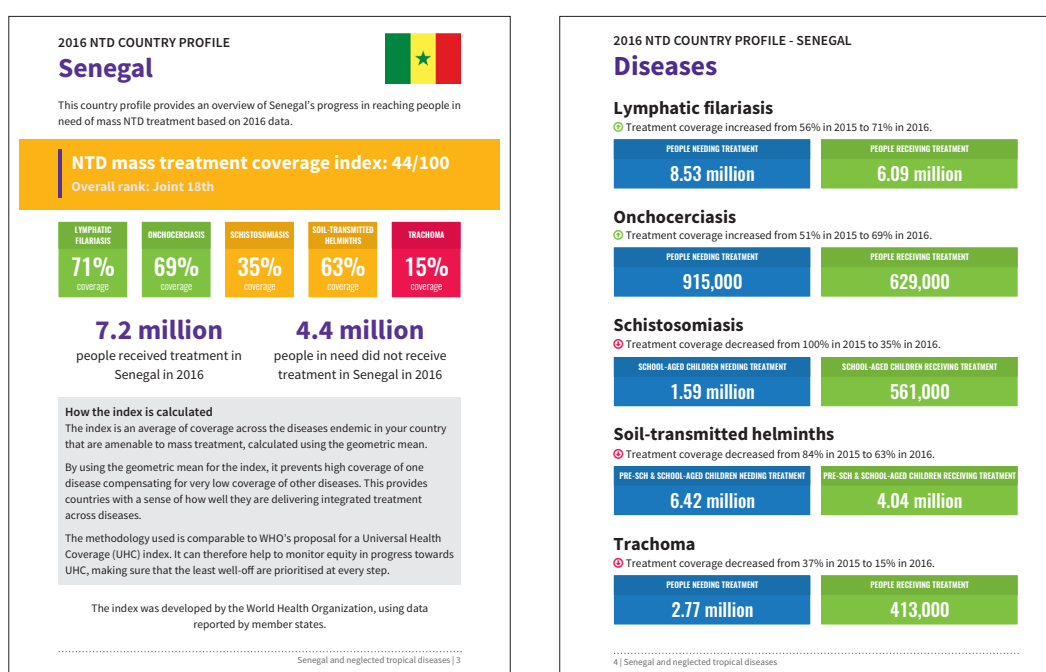
There should be agreement on the statements that will be made, as well as which partners and individuals are to be named consistently in statements to the media and the general public. Invitations should be made to dignitaries to attend and to journalists to cover these public events. Press releases and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) should be made available to the broadcast, digital and print media highlighting the key points that will be made at the event and why the event is important to cover. Under the pressure of deadlines, journalists will often integrate much of the content of a press release into their reports.

The Uniting to Combat NTDs Partnership



Uniting to Combat NTDs is a collective of invested, interested and dedicated partners, working to fulfil the London Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases. Through collaboration, information sharing, and aligned strategies, the diverse partners of the Uniting to Combat NTDs complement and extend the reach of the World Health Organization to support national programs in their efforts to build and implement NTD programs.

On their website, unitingtocombatntds.org, the Partnership developed country profiles that are available for download in their resources section. Here is a sample for Senegal:



USEFUL LINKS

- ALMA and NTDs: <https://unitingtocombatntds.org/africa/>
- Beat NTDs: <https://www.beatntds.org/>
- SDGs Knowledge Platform: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

In January 2019, The World Health Organization today launched a new toolkit to help improve delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene services to underserved populations affected by many neglected tropical diseases: "WASH and health working together, A 'how-to' guide for Neglected Tropical Disease programmes". Here is the link to the downloadable toolkit:

https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/wash-health-toolkit/en/