



## **100 LANDMARKS ACROSS THE WORLD LIGHT UP IN UNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS TO END NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES ON WORLD NTD DAY 2022**

- January 30, 2022 marks the third annual World NTD Day
- The 100 landmarks aim to shine a light on neglected tropical diseases and engage the public in an effort to end this diverse group of communicable diseases
- The WHO has set a goal to eliminate at least one NTD in 100 countries by 2030
- 100% Committed campaign, launched in tandem by Uniting to Combat NTDs, aims to mobilize commitments to achieve NTD elimination
- NTDs affect more than 1.7 billion people worldwide, disproportionately affecting the world's most vulnerable people
- Efforts to tackle NTDs are a global health success story, but COVID-19 threatens hard-fought progress

**[Insert location], 30 January 2022** – 100 landmarks in 34 countries lit up in unity to mark the third annual World NTD Day on January 30, 2022 including The Bell Tower in Perth, Tokyo Tower, Great Wall of China, Kuala Lumpur Tower, Sheikh Zayed Bridge in Abu Dhabi, Expo 2020 Dubai, The Rome Colosseum, Jet d' Eau, Niagara Falls, CN Tower, Carter Presidential Library, and Christ the Redeemer.

A special focus was placed on notable landmarks in endemic countries including Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, and Togo. There will also be several monuments, universities and notable buildings lighting up in Abu Dhabi, where World NTD Day was originally announced in 2019. The 100 'light ups' aim to shine a light on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), as World NTD Day supports the goal of the World Health Organization (WHO) to eliminate at least one NTD from 100 endemic countries by 2030.

World NTD Day is a global movement that aims to galvanize the global health community and engage the public in the urgent effort to end NTDs. This year Uniting to Combat NTDs used World NTD Day to launch the 100% Committed movement, which exists to begin securing political and financial commitments in support of the Kigali Declaration on NTDs. The Kigali Declaration, a high-level political declaration, provides the opportunity to mobilise the political will, community commitment, resources and action needed to end unnecessary suffering from NTDs.



Thoko Pooley, Executive Director of Uniting to Combat NTDs, said: "Today, building on the success of the London Declaration on NTDs, and recognising the changing global landscape, we are using World NTD Day 2022 as a catalyst for action. We are launching the 100% Committed campaign, a global movement to secure increased resources for neglected tropical diseases, and crucially to facilitate political leadership and ownership of NTD programmes from affected countries, through endorsements and signatories behind the new Kigali Declaration on NTDs."

World NTD Day was officially recognized by the WHO in May 2021. The UAE helmed diplomatic efforts to obtain official recognition of the day, and several WHO Member States were instrumental in building consensus to support it. The decision, proposed by the UAE alongside Oman and Brazil, was adopted unanimously. The Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi continues to play a leading role in building partnerships and supporting World NTD Day through the Reaching the Last Mile Initiative (RLM), a portfolio of global health programs focused on accelerating progress towards disease elimination that are driven by the personal commitment of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

Nassar Al Mubarak, Senior Director at the Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi, said: "World NTD Day represents an important catalyst to translate awareness into action – it is not only crucial for the public to know more about these diseases, but also for donors, endemic countries and other stakeholders to collaborate to bring an end to NTDs in affected countries. Over the past few decades, incredible progress has been made towards ending NTDs; however, one in five people in the most vulnerable communities around the world are still affected by these preventable and treatable diseases."

He added: "We are pleased to see World NTD Day providing a platform for raising awareness through the new 100% Committed campaign led by Uniting to Combat NTDs and efforts such as the light-up activation. We hope that this movement continues to gain traction and spark new partnerships and commitments necessary to beat NTDs for good and for all."

NTDs are a group of communicable diseases that are preventable and treatable, yet continue to affect more than 1.7 billion people worldwide, including 1 billion children. There are currently 20 diseases and disease groups defined as NTDs including river blindness (onchocerciasis), leprosy, elephantiasis (lymphatic filariasis), Guinea worm disease, rabies and intestinal worms (soil-transmitted helminths). NTDs cause immeasurable suffering – they debilitate, disfigure and can be fatal. By most commonly affecting some of the most vulnerable people in the world – who



often live in remote communities – NTDs create cycles of poverty and cost developing nations billions of dollars every year.

Research shows that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by NTDs, which affect remote, impoverished communities where they may experience more difficulty accessing health care than men. Their daily routines often consist of high-risk activities – such as washing clothes in rivers – that also make them more susceptible. Additionally, when NTDs affect someone in a family, the additional caregiving burden typically falls on women and girls, who are often forced to sacrifice their work or education to provide care.

This year's World NTD Day marks 10 years since the 2012 London Declaration on NTDs brought together pharmaceutical companies, donors, endemic countries, and non-government organisations to push for greater investment and action on NTDs. Since then, key successes include:

- Over 13 billion treatments donated by leading pharmaceutical companies
- 1 billion people reached each year with treatment (from 2015 to 2019, prior to COVID)
- 35 countries have eliminated at least one NTD, bringing the total to date to 43 countries
- 600 million fewer people no longer require treatment for NTDs

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening hard-fought progress on NTDs. COVID-19 has affected essential healthcare services across the world, with NTD programmes having been particularly badly disrupted. A recent WHO survey indicates that NTD programmes have been among the health services most frequently affected by the pandemic. As of early 2021, disruptions had occurred in 44% of countries; in 19% of countries NTD programmes were the most severely disrupted health service. Investments in strong public health systems are critical to both efforts to end NTDs and building resilience to respond to future pandemics.

Learn more by visiting: <https://worldntdday.org/>.

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### **About Reaching the Last Mile**

Reaching the Last Mile (RLM) is a portfolio of global health programs working towards disease elimination that is driven by the personal commitment of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. The Initiative provides treatment and preventative care in



communities that lack access to quality health services, with a specific focus on reaching the last mile of disease elimination. RLM's mission represents His Highness's dedication to ending preventable diseases that affect the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities and helping millions of children and adults live healthy, dignified lives.

<https://www.reachingthelastmile.com/>, @RLMGlobalHealth

### **Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases**

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of infectious diseases that affect over 1.7 billion people around the world. They debilitate, disfigure and can kill. Uniting to Combat NTDs is a collective of invested, interested and dedicated partners, including governments, donors, pharmaceutical companies, non-governmental organisations, academia and more. The partnership is committed to the fight to end the epidemic of NTDs.