GENEVA – *The* World Health Organization reports *remarkable achievements in tackling neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) since 2007. A*
n estimated 1 billion people received treatment
in 2015 alone.

"WHO has observed record-breaking progress towards bringing ancient scourges like sleeping sickness and elephantiasis to their knees," said WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan. "Over the past 10 years, millions of people have been rescued from disability and poverty, thanks to one of the most effective global partnerships in modern public health".

The WHO report, Integrating Neglected Tropical Diseases in Global Health and Development, demonstrates how strong political support, generous donations of medicines, improvements in living conditions, have led to sustained expansion of disease control programmes in countries where these diseases are most prevalent.
Since 2007, when a group of global partners met to agree to tackle NTDs together, a variety of local and international partners have worked alongside ministries of health in endemic countries to deliver quality-assured medicines, and provide people with care and long-term management.

In 2012, partners endorsed a WHO NTD Roadmap, committing additional support and resources to eliminating 10 of the most common NTDs.
Key achievements include:

- 1 billion people treated for at least one neglected tropical disease in 2015 alone;
- 556 million people received preventive treatment for lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis);
- More than 114 million people received treatment for onchocerciasis (river blindness: 62% of those requiring it;
- *Only 25 human cases of Guinea-worm disease were reported in 2016, putting eradication within reach* ;
- *Cases of human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) have been reduced from 37,000 new cases in 1999 to well under 3,000 cases in 2015* ;
- *Trachoma - the world's leading infectious cause of blindness - has been eliminated as a public health problem in Oman, Morocco and Mexico.* More than 185ÂÂ 000 trachoma patients had surgery for trichiasis worldwide and more than 56 million people received antibiotics in 2015 alone;
- *Visceral leishmaniasis: in 2015 the target for elimination was achieved in 82% of sub-districts in India, 97% of sub-districts in Bangladesh, and in 100% of districts in Nepal.*

- Only 12 reported human deaths were attributable to rabies in the Region of the Americas in 2015, bringing the region close to its target of eliminating rabies in humans by 2015.

However, the report highlights the need to further scale up action in other areas.

"Further gains in the fight against neglected tropical diseases will depend on wider progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals," said Dr Dirk Engels, Director of the Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases.

Meeting global targets for water and sanitation will be key. WHO estimates that 2.4 billion people still lack basic sanitation facilities such as toilets and latrines, while more than 660 million continue to drink water from "unimproved" sources, such as surface water.

Meanwhile, global concern about the recent outbreaks of Zika virus disease, and its associated complications, has re-energized efforts to improve vector control. In May this year, the World Health Assembly will review proposals for a new Global vector control response. There are also brighter prospects to prioritize cross-sectoral collaboration to promote veterinary public health.

Global Partners' Meeting

Integrating neglected tropical diseases in global health and development is being released at the Global Partners' Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Geneva, on 19 April 2017.

The Meeting will celebrate efforts to "Collaborate. Accelerate. Eliminate", and will be attended by health ministers, industry representatives, partners and a host of well-known personalities, including philanthropists, donors and stakeholders.

Besides celebrating 10 years of multi-stakeholder collaboration, the event will also mark the 5th anniversary of the WHO NTD Roadmap which established targets and milestones for the global control, elimination and eradication of many of these diseases as well as that of the London Declaration http://unitingtocombatntds.org/sites/default/files/resource_file/london_declaration_on_ntds.pdf