

The Role of International Pharmaceutical Companies in the Fight Against Neglected Tropical Diseases

A Historic Public-Private Partnership

In 2012, 10 companies joined governments, civil society, private funders, multilateral agencies and academia to endorse the London Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases – a collective commitment to reach the World Health Organization's (WHO) goals to control, eliminate and eradicate 10 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

The London Declaration is one of the great public health success stories of recent history. Since 2012, 40 countries have eliminated at least one NTD, and hundreds of million more people are no longer at significant risk of contracting an NTD. More than 787 million people received treatment for at least one NTD each year.

Industry Contributions to Progress Against NTDs

Donations of NTD medications have been a longtime pillar of the fight against NTDs – many pharmaceutical company donation programs have existed for decades. Since the London Declaration, pharmaceutical companies have donated more than 14 billion treatments to NTD programs as part of their commitment to fight NTDs and create a fairer, healthier world.

In addition to donating medicines, companies invest in R&D to develop new NTD treatments and diagnostics, fund supporting partners, and work in close partnership with country governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to solve supply chain problems to ensure donated medicines are delivered to people in need.

Key Facts and Figures

Since 2012, companies have donated more than 14 billion NTD treatments. As a result, more people than ever before receive at least one NTD drug: from 727 million in 2011 to more than 1.1 billion in 2019.

In 2019 alone, pharmaceutical companies donated nearly 1.8 billion NTD treatments compared to 970 million in treatments in 2011.

Since 2016, over 797 million individuals every year have received preventive chemotherapy (PC) interventions for at least one NTD.

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of people requiring treatment for at least one NTD fell from 2 billion to 1.7 billion, a drop of 300 million people.

The Kigali Declaration on NTDs

The world has never been closer to beating NTDs, yet despite the progress of the last decade, more than a billion people are still at risk from at least one NTD, and we still lack some critical tools that will enable us to achieve a world without these treatable, preventable diseases.

That is why companies are reinforcing their longtime partnerships with the public, philanthropic and private sectors to endorse the Kigali Declaration, in support of the new WHO Roadmap to control, eliminate or eradicate NTDs by 2030.

This commitment includes:

Supporting national and international access-to-medicines programs for NTDs – in alignment with the WHO 2030 NTD road map – through our committed donations of reliable, safe and effective medicines and diagnostics, supported by complementary funding from donors and governments to control, eliminate and/or eradicate NTDs.

Supporting R&D for new treatments, and their delivery to people and programs for safe and impactful scale-up, as required to meet the WHO 2030 NTD road map's goals and beyond.

Together with national and international partners, co-creating sustainable solutions for strengthening local health systems.

Supporting countries to take ownership of their NTD programs through the development of national plans that integrate NTD programs into national healthcare systems.

The Kigali Declaration on NTDs

Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)	17 countries have eliminated LF since 2012. Over 8.6 billion cumulative treatments have been delivered since 2000. However, 863 million people in 47 countries worldwide remain threatened by lymphatic filariasis.	Eisai donates DEC, GSK donates Albendazole, and Merck donates Mectizan to prevent LF. AbbVie donates drug discovery and expertise.
Onchocerciasis	1.8 million people live in areas that no longer require mass drug administration for onchocerciasis. However, over 240 million people still live in areas known to be endemic for onchocerciasis, most of which are in African countries	Merck donates Mectizan to treat onchocerciasis. AbbVie donates drug discovery and development.
Trachoma	The number of people at risk for trachoma has dropped by 91% globally, from 1.5 billion in 2002 to only 136.2 million in 2021.	Pfizer donates Azithromycin to treat Trachoma.
Soil-transmitted helminth (STH)	In 2016, 38 countries reached the World Health Assembly's target of treating at least 75% of school-age children for STHs. Approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide are infected with STHs	GSK donates Albendazole and J&J donates Mebendazole to treat STH.
Schistosomiasis	Over the past decade, treatment campaigns for schistosomiasis have scaled up in most sub-Saharan African countries, where more than 90% of those at risk live. Approximately 236.6 million people still required treatment for schistosomiasis in 2020.	Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany donates Praziquantel primarily for school age children to treat schistosomiasis.
Human African Trypanosomiasis (HAT)	Cases of HAT dropped below 10,000 in 2009 for the first time in 50 years. In 2021, while only 805 new people were infected with HAT, HAT is endemic in sub-Saharan Africa where 53 million people remain at risk.	Bayer donates Suramin for rHAT and Nifurtimox for NECT of gHAT. Sanofi donates a multi-drug therapy (pentamidine, melarsoprol, eflornithine) and fexinidazole to treat HAT.
Visceral leishmaniasis (VL)	An estimated 50,000-90,000 new cases of VL still occur annually (with only 25-45% reported to WHO).	Gilead donates AmBisome and Sanofi donates MDT regimens to treat VL.
Chagas	Thirty years ago, an estimated 175 million people were infected with Chagas. Today, around 6-7 million people are infected with the disease worldwide, and around 75 million people remain at risk.	Bayer donates Nifurtimox to treat Chagas disease.
Leprosy	Over 16 million leprosy patients have been treated with MDT over the past 20 years, resulting in a general reduction in new cases. The number of new cases was almost cut in half from 2011 to 2020 alone, with 127,558 new leprosy cases worldwide in 2020.	Novartis donates Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) to treat leprosy.

The private sector signatories of the London Declaration are:

Eisai • GSK • Merck • AbbVie • Pfizer • Bayer • J&J • Gilead • Sanofi • MSD • GSK • Novartis