

Seventy-sixth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

Statement

Agenda item 8.1: Regional Strategic Framework for sustaining, accelerating and innovating to end NTDs in the South-East Asia Region 2023–2030

[Link to agenda item 8.1](#)

Dear Chair, Honourable Ministers, and esteemed delegates. Uniting to Combat NTDs is a global advocacy organisation that exists to end neglected tropical diseases by mobilising resources in support of the World Health Organization's NTD road map and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Regional Director Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh for her leadership and prioritisation of NTD elimination as one of the eight priority programmes of the WHO South-East Asia Region since 2014.

We celebrate the seven countries that have already eliminated at least one NTD making the South-East Asia region a leader in NTD elimination.

We send our congratulations to the three countries that are being celebrated at this regional committee meeting (RC76) for extraordinary public health successes, two of which are in the fight against NTDs:

- Bangladesh for becoming the first country in the world to eliminate kala-azar as a public health problem;
- Maldives for the interruption of transmission of leprosy; and
- DPR Korea for the elimination of rubella.

We acknowledge that despite these great achievements our work is not yet done and there is much to do in the region to achieve the World Health Organization road map targets and to deliver the Strategic Framework presented today.

We urge the incoming Regional Director to continue with the regional flagship initiatives and re-commit to NTD elimination throughout South-East Asia.

We thank Timor Leste and the other 20 countries around the world who have endorsed the Kigali Declaration on NTDs and urge the rest of SEARO member states to endorse the declaration. [The Kigali Declaration](#) is a high-level, political declaration that mobilises political will, community commitment, resources and action, and secures commitments needed to end the suffering caused by NTDs.

We have an extraordinary window of opportunity to improve the lives of over a billion people. Let us embrace this opportunity.

Thank you.

Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases

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