



## January 30: World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day

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### Why in News

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The ongoing **74<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly** declared **30<sup>th</sup> January** as 'World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Day.

- The proposal to recognise the day was **floated by the United Arab Emirates**. It was adopted unanimously by the delegates. The **first World NTD Day** was celebrated **informally in 2020**.
- The World Health Assembly is the **decision-making body of World Health Organization (WHO)**.

### Key Points

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- **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD):**
  - NTDs are **a group of infections that are most common among marginalised communities in the developing regions** of Africa, Asia and the Americas. They are caused by a variety of **pathogens** such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasitic worms.

NTDs are especially **common in tropical areas where people do not have access to clean water** or safe ways to dispose of human waste.
  - These diseases **generally receive less funding for research and treatment than** malaises like **tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS and malaria**.
  - **Examples of NTDs are: snakebite envenomation, scabies, yaws, trachoma, Leishmaniasis and Chagas disease etc.**
- **London Declaration on NTDs:**
  - It was adopted on **30<sup>th</sup> January, 2012** to recognise the global burden of NTDs.
  - Officials from the **World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, representatives** from leading global pharmaceutical companies as well as representatives of several national governments met at **London's Royal College of physicians** to pledge to end the diseases.

- **WHO's New Roadmap for 2021–2030:**
  - From measuring process to **measuring impact**.
  - From disease-specific planning and programming to **collaborative work across sectors**.
  - From externally driven agendas reliant to programmes that are **country-owned and country-financed**.
- **NTD Scenario:**
  - NTDs **affect more than a billion people globally**.  
They are **preventable and treatable**. However, these **diseases - and their intricate interrelationships with poverty and ecological systems -** continue to cause devastating health, social and economic consequences.
  - There are **20 NTDs** that impact over **1.7 billion** people worldwide.
  - **India carries the largest burden of at least 11 of these diseases**, with parasitic illnesses like **kala-azar** and **lymphatic filariasis** affecting millions of people throughout the country – often the poorest and most vulnerable.
- **Indian Initiatives to Eliminate NTDs:**
  - The **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF)** was launched in **2018**, as part of intensifying efforts towards the elimination of NTDs.
  - A **WHO-supported regional alliance established by the governments of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal in 2005** to expedite early diagnosis and treatment of the most vulnerable populations and improve disease surveillance and control of sandfly populations (**Kala-azar**).
  - India **has already eliminated several other NTDs**, including guinea worm, trachoma, and yaws.

**Source: DTE**