

World NTD Day

World NTD Day is a day to raise awareness about neglected tropical diseases (NTD). The first World NTD Day was on January 30, 2020.

This article will give brief details about World NTD Day as well as well-rounded information on Neglected Tropical Diseases. The information gained from this article will be useful in the current affairs segment of the IAS Exam.

Brief Facts about World NTD Day

- World Neglected Tropical Disease Day was announced by Reem Al Hashimi on behalf of the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) November 19, 2019.
- Reem Al Hasmi is a Minister of State in the UAE. Her government has done much investment in combating NTDs.
- January 30 is significant because that was when the London declaration of 2012 was made on NTDs. The declaration called for communities and governments across the world to band together in order to combat NTDs better.
- About 1.7 billion people are under threat from Neglected Tropical Diseases. It affects the poor and marginalized the most. (Source: <https://worldntdday.org/learn-more/>)
- The main reason an awareness day on NTDs is needed is that greater action and investment and priority is needed on those communities affected by such diseases.
- Moreover, this was one of the key health issues which did not have a dedicated advocacy until January 2020.

What are Neglected Tropical Diseases?

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of tropical infections which are common in low-income populations in developing regions of Africa, Asia, and America.

A wide variety of pathogens like bacteria, viruses, parasites cause NTDs. In contrast to diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, HIV/AIDS they received comparatively less attention and funding.

Neglected Tropical Diseases are not restricted to developing nations alone, they are also found among the poorest echelons of society in the developed nations. Since the healthcare infrastructure is beyond reach for those among the low-income group, treatment of such diseases is quite negligible.

Why are such diseases neglected?

There are multiple reasons why such diseases are neglected in public health discourse. Some of them are as follows:

- Since most NTDs have a long incubation period along with the absence of any symptoms, the connection made between a death and infection by NTDs have not been made for a long time.
- Some Neglected Tropical Diseases are endemic to one region alone. Therefore, treatment and prevention of NTDs are difficult.
- Neglected tropical diseases do not have a prominent cultural figure to champion the cause.
- Treatment of neglected tropical diseases is made difficult due to the social stigma that comes with it.
- The stigma prevents or decreases chances of those afflicted from seeking help or treatment.

The likely reason why this disease has earned the moniker of 'neglected' is because they are of little interest to commercial entities. Diseases themselves are non-commercial areas and as such research and development of medicines to the company themselves are risky.

For this reason, resources are not often put into the field of NTDs (as diseases of the poor) and new chemical products are often expensive.

The lack of incentive from the pharma industry has forced NTD programs which have been successful of late to rely on donors and philanthropic endeavors.

A report found that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded most extra activities to counter these diseases.

List of Tropical Neglected Diseases

Over 20 Neglected Tropical Diseases have been identified by the World Health Organisation as priority disease that needs to be combated. It should be noted that other organizations define NTDs differently.

The list of the Neglected Tropical Diseases prioritized by the WHO are as follows:

1. Buruli ulcer
2. Chagas disease
3. Dengue
4. Dracunculiasis
5. Echinococcosis

6. Yaws
7. Fascioliasis
8. African trypanosomiasis
9. Leishmaniasis
10. Leprosy
11. Lymphatic filariasis
12. Onchocerciasis
13. Rabies
14. Schistosomiasis
15. Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
16. Cysticercosis
17. Trachoma
18. Scabies and other ectoparasites
19. Snakebite envenoming
20. Mycetoma and deep mycoses

Frequently Asked Question About Neglected Tropical Disease

Why are some diseases called Neglected Tropical Disease?

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), such as dengue, lymphatic filariasis, trachoma, and leishmaniasis, are called "neglected," because they generally afflict the world's poor and historically have not received as much attention as other diseases

Can neglected tropical diseases be cured?

Many neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are treatable with existing drugs. Certain treatments are easy to administer and do not require health professionals. The most prominent drawback, however, is that, while drug treatments are available for many NTDs, they don't often reach the people most in need.