



FIRST NATIONAL NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCHED

Nairobi, 10th November 2011– Kenya officially launched the first National Neglected Tropical Diseases Strategic Plan at a colourful ceremony presided over by the Assistant Minister for Public Health and Sanitation, Hon. Dr James Gesami. The country becomes the first in the African Region to launch a Multi- Year (2011-2015) NTD strategic plan aimed at accelerating the control of NTDs in the country.

Others at the launch were the WHO African Regional Office (AFRO) Director for Disease Prevention and Control (DPC) Programme, Dr Jean-Baptiste ROUNGOU representing the WHO/AFRO Regional Director, Dr Luis SAMBO, representatives of the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (GNNTD), Kenya Private Sector Association (KEPSA), other top government officials and members of the media.



Assistant Minister, Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, Hon. Dr James Gesami gives his key remarks at the launch

In his key remarks, the Assistant Minister, Dr Gesami, highlighted the major NTDs in Kenya to include, Schistosomiasis, Soil Transmitted Helminthes, Lymphatic Filariasis, Trachoma, Leishmaniasis and the Hydatid Disease. *“These diseases constitute serious impediment to the socio-economic development and quality of life of affected persons, have enormous burden in terms of disease burden, loss of productivity and the aggravation of poverty and high cost of long term care”*, stated Dr Gesami.

The Minister also identified the key control interventions as per the strategic plan, preventive chemotherapy, case management, vector control, provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene and veterinary public health. He explained the purpose of the NTD Multi-year NTD plan of guiding the implementation of NTDs in the country in an integrated way to maximize benefits.

The Minister also expressed his satisfaction and gratitude with the team that had worked tirelessly on developing the plan and urged all partners including the local communities to raise the awareness of NTDs through concerted health promotion and education strategies. Dr Gesami assured all of the government’s commitment towards the implementation of the plan and appealed to all partners to renew their commitment towards this course.



Dr. Jean-Baptiste ROUNGOU, WHO/AFRO Director for Disease Prevention and Control programme gives his remarks at the launch

Speaking at the launch, Dr ROUNGOU, underlined the burden of NTDs, with Africa experiencing the highest burden of about 50% globally. Dr. ROUNGOU informed all of the development of the WHO Strategic Plan for the Control of NTDs in the African region for the period 2010-2015. *“This strategic plan articulates the road map, principles and approaches to accelerate the reduction of NTDs in the African region. It also forms the basis for the development of national comprehensive multi-year plans for NTD control (also called NTD Master Plans)”*. He congratulated Kenya for being the first in the region to complete the development of its national NTD Master Plan.

The Director also highlighted some of the lessons learnt in tackling NTDs in the region. These include; strong political and sustained financial commitment from countries, effective and committed partnerships to complement and enhance government efforts, effective monitoring of programme implementation and timely reporting of achievements to partners to maintain the engagement of all stakeholders.

Dr ROUNGOU acknowledged the recent donations from GlaxoSmithKline and Johnson & Johnson 600 million de-worming tablets annually.

Finally, the Director assured the government and all of WHO’s commitment in providing the necessary support required, and called upon all stakeholders, including the recipient communities to play their Respective roles as indicated in the NTD Master Plan to ensure that targets are met as planned. The Director also presented a donation of 2,664,000 tablets of Praziquantel be used for the School de-worming programme against Schistosomiasis. The total cost the drugs is US\$ 245,167.92.

NTD strategic plan documents



Dr ROUNGOU handing over A box of Praziquantel tablets to Ass. Minister Dr James Gesami, Permanent Secretary, Mark Bor Looks on



NTD strategic Plan documents

Advocacy activities including the de-worming of school children and media briefs preceded the launch of the strategic plan.



School children from Githurai Primary School prepare to receive de-worming tablet. Right – Dr Rongou addresses the children before the start of the de-worming exercise.



WHO/AFRO Director, Dr Rongou delivering de-worming tablets to school children



DPC officer/KCO, Dr Joyce Onsongo, gives de-worming tablets to some of the school children



Some of the parents present also receiving de-worming tablets from the nurses

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