

# INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Date: 13-16 April 2026

Venue: Lilongwe, Malawi

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### 2026 ANNUAL NTD PROGRAMME MANAGERS MEETING

#### INVITATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

**What:** 2026 ANNUAL NTD PROGRAMME MANAGERS MEETING

**Theme:** “Leveraging Innovative Tools and Sustainable Financing to Advance NTD Elimination in Africa”.

**When:** 13 – 16 April 2026

**Where:** Bingu International Conference Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi

**Who:** African Union Commission (AUC), Republic of Malawi, and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO)

#### **Background:**

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) have long affected the poorest and most vulnerable communities, particularly in Africa, where several countries remain endemic for at least one disease. Global interventions have relied heavily on mass drug administration as well as case management, and since 2010, these efforts have reduced the number of people needing treatment by 32%. Yet, in 2023, 1.495 billion people worldwide still required interventions, with Africa carrying about 35% of the global burden. To achieve sustainable elimination, MDA alone is not sufficient as there is a need for robust vector control, improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and comprehensive health systems strengthening, which must all be prioritized and implemented alongside drug-based strategies. Despite several African countries successfully eliminating certain NTDs, significant barriers remain to achieving the 2030 elimination targets. Several factors, including declining funding, cross-border transmission, the growing impacts of climate change, and weak integration of NTD programmes into primary health care systems, continue to undermine progress and place recent gains at risk. This underscores the urgent need for a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach, supported by strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms, to accelerate progress and deliver on the mandate of ensuring healthy and well-nourished African citizens, in line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the AU Roadmap to 2030 and beyond.

#### **Meeting Objectives:**

1. To review Member States' progress toward elimination goals, with a priority focus on the dissemination of national climate mitigation plans that include NTDs, and integrating NTD interventions into national health strategies, and primary health care
2. To evaluate Member States' progress in establishing dedicated NTD budget lines, and to accelerate domestic resource mobilization and innovative financing for sustainable programming
3. To strengthen national and regional systems by enhancing timely, high-quality health information reporting; fostering robust community engagement and local advocacy;

and institutionalizing cross-border collaboration through synchronized surveillance and data-driven planning

**Expected outcomes:**

- i. An enhanced understanding of Member States' progress toward elimination goals, identifying critical gaps, and validating interventions for integrating NTDs into broader national frameworks, specifically climate change mitigation plans
- ii. A documented assessment of financial sustainability, detailing the establishment of dedicated domestic budget lines for NTDs and the deployment of innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate local funding.
- iii. Agreed-upon frameworks for unified data reporting standards to ensure accuracy, alongside synchronized procedures for cross-border data sharing, joint planning, and coordinated surveillance.

**Meeting participants:**

NTD Programme Managers from all AU Member States, African Union Commission, Africa CDC, AUDA-NEPAD, WHO-AFRO, and EMRO, NTDs Partners, and Health Institutions

**Meeting Themes:**

**Day 1: Integration and Resilience;** Reviewing progress made in NTDs elimination as well as climate change and PHC/Education integration.

**Day 2: Data and Collaboration;** Strengthening regional coordination through cross-border surveillance, use of AI/Digital tools, and streamlining reporting standards.

**Day 3: Financing and Sustainability;** Exploring the establishment of dedicated budget lines, innovative financing, and domestic resource mobilization.

**Day 4: Innovation and Independence;** Promoting advancement of research and development, local manufacturing, accountability, and transparency.

**Media invitation:**

Members of the media and journalists are invited to cover both the opening and closing sessions of the meeting. Requests for interviews should be addressed to the contacts listed below.

**For further information, please contact:**

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