

.... promoting health, protecting people and serving the vulnerable in society

World Neglected Tropical Disease Day: Achieving health equity to end the neglect of poverty-related diseases



Some equipment donated to Niger state Government by WHO

"The first time I noticed a sore on my left hand, I did not take it seriously because I thought I had injured myself unknowingly. However, when the wound failed to heal, and sores came out, on the other hand, I decided to go to the hospital", says Mr. Bako Ibrahim, a 25 years old taxi driver resident in Gima village, Konduga Local Government Area (LGA), Borno State.

Mr. Bako was diagnosed with Cutaneous Leishmaniasis, a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTDs).

"I do not know how I contracted the disease. I have not been able to work in the last eight weeks because of the sore on my hands", he said.

Mr Bako is one of the 1.5 billion people infected by NTDs, such as Leishmaniasis, Buruli Ulcer, Chagas Disease, Leprosy, Cysticercosis, Dengue Fever, Dracunculiasis (Guinea Worm Disease) Echinococcosis, Fascioliasis, found in several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In commemoration of this year's World NTD Day, the Government of Nigeria reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating all forms of NTDs, while urging stakeholders to focus on mobilizing local resources to strengthen interventions in tackling the high burden of the diseases.

The Minister of State for Health, Dr Olorunnimbe Mamora, addressing to stakeholders and journalists at the ministerial press briefing in Abuja on the 28th of January 2022, said Africa bears about half of the global burdens of NTDs, with Nigeria contributing substantially with more than 120 million people living at risk of contracting at least one NTDs.

In his goodwill message, the WHO Country Representative (WR), Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo, said this year's theme is "Achieving health equity to end the neglect of poverty-related diseases" emphasizes the need for increased collaboration by all stakeholders to eradicate the diseases.

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<https://www.afro.who.int/countries/nigeria>

Government partners decry stigmatization of people living with leprosy



WR giving his opening remark at the Press briefing to commemorate World Leprosy Day

In commemoration of the 2022 World Leprosy Day, the Government of Nigeria and Partners have decried the continuous stigmatization of people living with the disease.

The Honorable Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, speaking at a ministerial press briefing to mark the day in Abuja on 31st of January 2022, said stigmatization continues to have negative impact to the successful elimination of the disease and re-integration of those cured back into their communities.

Dr Ehanire noted that leprosy is a public health issue and puts the country among the last nations in the world to defeat the disease, with more than 1,000 new cases still reported in a year.

In 2020, Nigeria notified 1,508 new cases, of which over 13% had a visible deformity of fingers and toes, and more than 6 % were children.

"Efforts to combat the disease is still affected by challenges. Stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their families remains a challenge. The wrong beliefs that it is contagious, hereditary or ordained punishment and the fear of rejection by family and friends, deter victims from seeking early care if they suspect leprosy and discourage those cured of integration back into their communities.

Dr Mulombo pledged WHO's commitment to collaborate with other key partners to step-up action in supporting the Federal Ministry of Health to mobilize the needed domestic and international resources required for the control, elimination and eradication of Leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases in the country.

He said WHO is also committed to facilitating the donation of all needed medicines for Leprosy as it has always done each year.

"Finally, I want to encourage individuals, communities, and local governments to encourage surveillance, testing and treatment for leprosy and to learn more about this disease, to end the silent epidemic", he added.

[Read more](#)

Survivors affirm that regular testing for early diagnosis is panacea to curbing cancer.

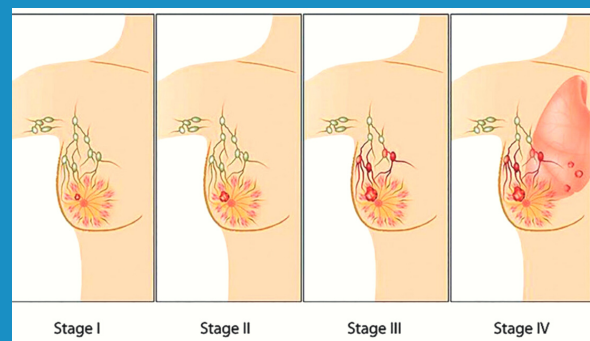
"In 2014, I noticed a small swelling in my left breast and didn't pay attention as it was initially painless and I thought it will resolve by itself" says Grace David, a 68-year-old woman living in FCT, Abuja that survived breast cancer.

"When the swelling became bigger, I noticed a dimple, with slight pain and nipple discharge, I confided in my neighbor who advised me to visit the hospital immediately for a proper check by a doctor. I immediately went to the hospital and had to undergo series of examinations and tests.

I was confirmed to have stage two breast cancer and was told I need to have a mastectomy (a surgery to remove all breast tissue from a breast as a way to treat or prevent breast cancer), radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

After the surgery, I had several courses of chemotherapy and radiotherapy over a period of time. It was a tough time for me physically and mentally as I experienced darkening of the skin, loss of hair, poor appetite, weight loss and I was always tired. I have almost recovered from all these side-effects and I am happy to say, I was declared cancer-free in 2016. I am grateful to have gone to see the doctor when I did, otherwise, I may not have survived if I further delayed" she adds.

"Lack of awareness on breast cancer made me lose my left breast and I was ashamed to tell anyone about what I was experiencing at that time. If I knew what I know now, I would have gone to the doctor on time and maybe would have not required all the treatment I received. Most of my hospital bills were out of pocket and I am truly grateful to my friends and family members who rallied around me. I would not have been able to afford the care without their support".



Stage of Breast Cancer

In 2018, an estimated 9.6 million deaths were due to Cancers, making Cancers the second leading cause of death globally. Breast, colorectal, lung, cervical and thyroid cancers are the most common among women while lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancers are most common among men.

Every year, Africa records around 1.1 million new cases of cancer, resulting in up to 700 000 deaths. Breast cancer, along cervical, prostate, liver and colorectal cancers, account for almost half the new cases on the continent annually.

According to WHO In Nigeria, an estimated 115 950 cases were detected in 2018 with 70 327 deaths recorded. Breast cancer is the most common among women while prostate cancer for men.

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Stakeholders prioritize cancer awareness and sensitization in Borno state



Group photograph at the commemoration of the World Cancer Day, 2022.

"I now have more information about breast and cervical cancer. Before now, I knew cervical cancer is deadly, but I had no knowledge of how to prevent it. Now I do and I intend to share the knowledge with my co-wives and other women in my locality. Women are mothers of the society and we need to take our health seriously. We also need to be healthy so that we can keep our families healthy", says Fatima Musa, a 45 years old housewife living in Jere Local Government Area, Borno State.

As part of the effort to continue raising awareness and sensitization on cancer among Nigerians, the Borno State Government through Multi Aid and Charity Initiative (MACI) Foundation in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a week campaign aimed at increasing people's awareness on cancer prevention, screening, treatment and the need to support cancer patient.

The Cancer Awareness Walk 2022, tagged: "close the care gap", commenced on 4 February in commemoration of the World Cancer Day.

The theme, "close the care gap", signifies the start of a three-year campaign with the aim of raising global awareness around cancer and its impacts, especially on most vulnerable persons.

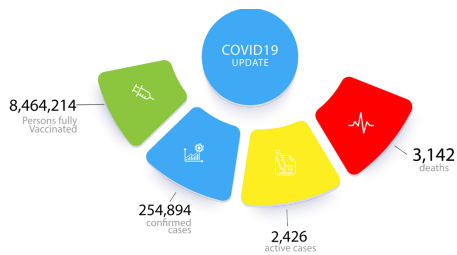
Speaking at the flag-off of the awareness walk, the Chief Executive Officer of the Multi Aid and Charity Initiative Foundation, the first lady of Borno state, Dr. Falmata Babagana Zulum appreciated WHO for its continuous and unrelenting support to saving lives. She said that the campaign is to raise awareness on both detection and prevention of cancer as it is vital to saving people's lives.

"The campaign is being deliberate and intentional in ensuring that our people (especially the vulnerable women and girls) have the knowledge about disease.

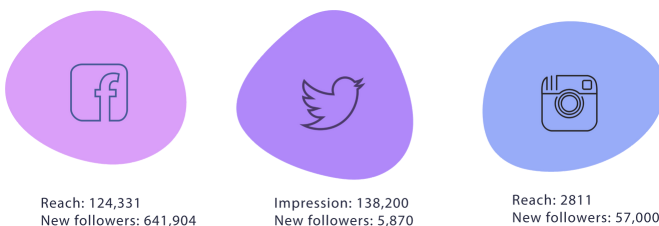
Noting that cancer is a treatable disease, Mrs Zulum said the disease could be dealt with if people take health matters seriously. Meanwhile, the WHO Northeast Emergency Manager Dr Richard Lako in his remark said "WHO will continue to work closely with the state government to make certain, no vulnerable person that needs basic essential health services is left unattended to.

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COVID 19 UPDATE 11 MARCH 2022



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS FEBRUARY



CALENDAR OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH DAYS 2022

MARCH

- 1 Zero Discrimination Day
- 4 World Obesity Day
- 4 HPV Awareness Day
- 8 International Women's Day
- 20 World Oral Health Day
- 21 World Down Syndrome Day
- 22 World Water Day
- 24 World Tuberculosis Day

North East Nigeria - providing essential health intervention in hard-to-reach communities one step at a time



Fatima at the MNCH session in Kwaya-kusar LGA.

Relieved and smiling, Hassana Isa recounts the ordeal her daughter (Fatima), had to go through in the past months. Two years old Fatima living in the Kwaya-kusar Local Government Area, with her parents in Borno State was ill and frail, when she was identified malnourished by a team of mobile health care services providers carrying out health intervention in the locality.

"I knew something was wrong with her health and growth but I couldn't do anything to make it easy. The humanitarian crisis had affected my family and displaced us from our home. We struggle to survive as we have very little to eat. If I had the means, I would have shielded her from this ordeal. Her birth brought joy to my family and she was my little beautiful baby girl" says Mrs Isa.

For some weeks, Fatima had been unwell and had looked smaller than her age. With each passing day, Fatima became weaker and neighbors advised her parents to seek treatment at the Maternal Newborn and Child Healthcare (MNCH) intervention supported by the WHO, where integrated nutrition services are provided.

Due to the humanitarian crisis, the World Health Organization mobile health care hard-to-reach team supports three states, Adamawa, Borno and Yobe in hard-to-reach and inaccessible locations in the states as well as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

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Regional Director expresses support for Nigeria's efforts to bolster health services



Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, speaking at the PORT to ARMS presser

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, has underscored the Organization's commitment to support Nigeria's efforts in reinforcing its health system for better access to adequate and quality health services. Dr Moeti made the pledge during a visit to Africa's most population country from 20 to 25 February 2022.

Dr Moeti met with His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari to discuss stronger collaboration to support Nigeria. Among the issues raised was the need to boost vaccine access and the uptake of immunization to reinforce the country's capacity to fight vaccine-preventable diseases, such as vaccine-derived polio virus type 2 (cVDPV2). The delegation that visited the president also reviewed progress towards meeting Nigeria's immunization accountability framework indicators.

"I assure you that the Government of Nigeria will sustain and improve our work on routine immunization performance; contain outbreaks of the circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus, strengthen surveillance against wild poliovirus and curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus," President Buhari said.

Dr Moeti commended Nigeria for maintaining the state budget to primary health care despite the COVID-19 response and acknowledged the far-reaching impact of Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) revitalization on health service provision and community development. She emphasised the importance of affordable health infrastructure in addressing health access and quality needs in the country.

"I congratulate the government for ensuring that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria has continued with the policy of allocating 1% of consolidated revenue funds for primary health care through the Basic Health Care Provision Funds, which holds the potential for changing the narrative in financing healthcare in Nigeria," said Dr Moeti.

"We are committed to supporting the government of Nigeria to strengthen its public health system to ensure equitable access to quality health services, including immunization programmes which are crucial in safeguarding health and protecting lives. As the continent's most populous nation, Nigeria has a pivotal role in helping to raise public health standards and practices for Africa," said Dr Moeti.

The Regional Director also held initial discussions with the Minister of Finance, Hajija Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, as well as leadership of the five Health committees of the National Assembly to advocate appropriate financing for health aimed to strengthen collaboration for health security and universal health coverage towards reducing incidence of poverty due to illness.

Dr Moeti also participated in the GAVI Alliance-Wide High-Level Mission. She also met with WHO Nigeria staff, whom she commended on supporting the government in its bid to achieve universal health coverage. She discussed the ongoing strategic repositioning to align with the WHO transformation agenda.

This mission was Dr Moeti's fourth to Nigeria and comes as the country has embarked on a mass vaccination campaign against COVID-19 to ensure that at least 70% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated before the end of the year.

GALLERY



Dr. Moeti Matshidiso RD WHO African Region arrives Nigeria



Courtesy visit to the Minister of Finance

Courtesy visit to the Minister of Health

Courtesy visit to the Senate committee on Health

RD speaking during the Port to Arms presser



Group photograph during the handover of AstraZeneca vaccines and solar direct drive refrigerators to NPHCDA



Dr Walter Kazadi giving his welcome address

Birthdays/Social Events

We celebrate all our colleagues born in the month of February, this is to wish you a happy and blessed birthday.

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