



OPENING OF THE 20TH SESSION OF THE JOINT ACTION FORUM



The opening ceremony of JAF20 kicked off on 8 December 2014 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and was presided over by the Minister of Health of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr Kesetebirhan Admasu.

APOC member states took part in the opening ceremony, with some delegations led by high-ranking officials. Among those present were Health Ministers of Burundi, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan, the Secretaries of State of Health of Cameroon and Chad, and the Under-Secretary of Health of Sudan. Also present were representatives of development partners and donors, NGOs supporting onchocerciasis and LF elimination, various GAELF partners; representatives of APOC's TCC (Technical Consultative Committee) and TTF (Transition Task Force), research institutions, and members of the CSA (Committee of Sponsoring Agencies).

Speeches were made by the following:

- **Dr Pierre M'Pélé**, WHO Representative in Ethiopia
- **Dr Jean-Baptiste Rongou**, APOC Director
- **Dr Adrian Hopkins**, Representative of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF)
- **Dr Julie Jacobson**, of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), who represented stakeholders of the United to fight NTDs
- **Dr Damas Bodzongo**, representing **Mr François Ibovi**, Minister of Health of the Republic of Congo, Chair of JAF19
- **H.E. Dr Kesete-Birhan Admasu**, Federal Minister of Health of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

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EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH OF THE MINISTER OF HEALTH OF ETHIOPIA

The Minister of Health of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr KESETE-BIRHAN ADMASU, officially declared the 20th Joint Action Forum open yesterday 8 December 2014 at the United Nations Conference Centre. The Federal Minister of Health expressed his delight that this meeting was being held in Ethiopia, for "this meeting was unique" for several reasons.



Dr KESETEBIRHAN ADMASU,
Federal Minister of Health , Ethiopia

The Minister said, "First, it is the time when we will be winding up the African Program for Onchocerciasis Control, with its 15-year commendable achievements and looking forward to its transitioning to a new entity entitled, "Programme for Elimination of Neglected Diseases in Africa" or known as PENDA. The second reason, according to the Minister, is linked to the idea that several communities fighting against NTDs are at the meeting in Addis Ababa. He continued by saying that, "this is one of the rare opportunities when NTD integration in seen in action".

The Minister then recalled the burden of the devastating effects of NTDs on Africans, adding that NTDs gain grounds where there is limited access to potable water and sanitation. He mentioned that, "these diseases are the cause of malnutrition and anaemia; pregnancy complication; blindness; retarded cognitive and stunted growth in children; all this perpetuates poverty of those affected by impeding on their productivity".

He mentioned Ethiopia's example, a country which is burdened by NTDs, but which enjoys strong political commitment at the highest level. This commitment is manifested through the implementation of several initiatives, one of which is the launch of the Master Plan for the control of NTDs, and organising a national symposium on NTDs to push the struggle forward.

Dr KESETEBIRHAN ADMASU was of the view that a lot has already been done, but a lot more needed to be done. He added, "The momentum to eliminate NTDs globally and in Africa is growing. Major political commitments and resolutions to address NTDs have piled up. To achieve these commitments and pledges made in the past, we must learn our lessons from our home-grown past achievements."

EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH OF WHO REPRESENTATIVE

During the opening ceremony of the 20th Session of the Joint Action Forum (JAF), the Meeting of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF) and the Global Meeting of the STH Coalition with the Schistosomiasis Alliance, Dr Pierre M'Pélé, WHO representative in Ethiopia welcomed participants to "the beautiful city of Addis Ababa" and to these joint meetings.



**Dr Pierre M'Pélé,
WHO Representative for Ethiopia**

He described how the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) affect most people living in remote parts of Africa including children, "the future of our nations".

To him, the control of NTDs in Africa showed hopeful results. Hence, "It is time the world came together once again "to totally free our people from "these dehumanizing conditions." What he thinks should be possible with high-level political commitment, strong leadership, global support by our development partners, use of available resources in "an integrated and efficient manner", fulfillment of our commitments, scale-up of interventions to reach affected people, mobilization of the community and use of innovative approaches to reach all the affected communities .

He trusts "This historic meeting will bring significant decisions that will help to step up the battle towards elimination and eradication of NTDs; so we can see the Africans healthy, cheerful and productive."

He ended his opening remarks by wishing participants "fruitful deliberations and an enjoyable stay in Addis Ababa."

EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH OF APOC DIRECTOR

The APOC Director thanked the government and people of Ethiopia for their hospitality, especially for accepting to host this year's JAF. He recalled the importance of the gathering, which he deemed "historic", and underscored the fact that "it is the first time that APOC partners, the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis, and the Coalition against Schistosomiasis are meeting to discuss NTDs". In his views, the meeting of these three groups is a clear demonstration of the choice of the theme of the session, namely "Building partnerships with a view to achieving accelerated elimination of NTDs with preventive chemotherapy in Africa".



**Dr Jean Baptiste Roungou,
APOC Director**

The Director of APOC then brought to memory the decision to close APOC in 2015 and replace it with a new structure, PENDA – Programme for Elimination of Neglected Diseases in Africa – adding that "The decision of this 20th session will be critical with respect to how APOC closure will be done without any negative impact on the achievements thus made regarding actions relating to the control of lymphatic filariasis towards the successful launch of PENDA" He reassured all and sundry that "We will continue to work relentlessly to ensure satisfactory closure of APOC in 2015 and launch PENDA successfully in 2016."

Dr Jean-Baptiste Roungou took the opportunity to praise the efforts of the outgoing WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Luis Sambo, while congratulating the newly elected Regional Director, Dr Matshidiso Moeti for her election. He expressed his deepest appreciation to the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies (CSA), to African health ministers of endemic countries and to all stakeholders. He added that, "We would like to take this opportunity to encourage countries to contribute to the Trust Fund, and also to increase the funds for implementing their national programmes.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF WORK - DAY 2, TUESDAY 09TH DECEMBER 2014

Election of Officers	10:30-10:40
Adoption of the Agenda	10:40-10:45
Reflections of the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies	10:45-11:05
PROGRESS ON ELIMINATION	
Report of the World Health Organization	11:05-11:25
Discussion	11:25-11:45
Report of the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC)	11:45-12:00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions • Conclusions and decisions on the above agenda items 	12:00-12:15 12:15-12:25
Country reports: Statements by Honorable Ministers of Health – Angola, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, CAR, DRC	12:25-13:00
Lunch Break	13:00-14:30
Country reports (con't): Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi	14:30-15:40
Summary of treatment coverage: Presentation by Representative of countries	15:40-16:00
Tea Break	16:00-16:30
Statements by the Honorable Ministers of Health – Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda,	16:30-17:10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions 	17:10-17:30
Conclusions and decisions on the above agenda item	17:30-17:35
Report of the NGDO Coordination Group for Onchocerciasis Elimination	17:35-17:45
Discussions / Conclusions and decisions on the above agenda items	17:45-17:55 / 17:55-18:00

EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH OF GAELF REPRESENTATIVE

Dr Adrian Hopkins, Executive Secretary of the Global Alliance for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF) began his opening remarks by introducing GAELF which was created in 2000 to provide financial and technical assistance to the WHO Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF). He added that the goal of GAELF is “to bring together a diverse group of public-private health partners to support the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis by mobilizing political, financial and technical resources to ensure success”. GAELF and GPELF are in their 15th year and, this is a “time for celebrating a long lasting and successful public health programme, but time also to look forward to the challenges in front of us” as there are still more to do even if 4.4 billion treatments were delivered to an approximate population of 984 people in 56 countries. Dr Adrian Hopkins considered that Lymphatic Filariasis and Onchocerciasis elimination has to coordinate where it is feasible to the benefit of both programmes and he highlighted the important role PENDA will play in the elimination of NTDs in Africa whatever the structure will be. He concluded that the meetings in the week are too important, as the elimination of LF in 2020 as planned, must be in the context of other NTDs.



EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH OF JAF19 CHAIR



*M. Damas Bodzongo,
représentant le Président du FAC19*

Mr Francois Ibovi, Minister of Health of the Republic of the Congo and JAF19 Chair, in his speech read on his behalf, expressed his gratitude to the government of Ethiopia for the brotherly and warm reception.

He congratulated the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies (CSA) and APOC Management “which set to work immediately following the adoption of the concept note and the strategic plan of action and budget of the new Programme for Elimination of Neglected Diseases in Africa (PENDA) to implement related recommendations and make proposals to be submitted to this august assembly.

In his view, the proposal of WHO as implementing agency of PENDA would be in line with the “spirit of the United Nations” and ensure “equitable access by affected populations to interventions beyond all political and other interests”. He strongly recommended that “endemic countries and WHO continue to collaborate harmoniously with all other stakeholders, such as NGOs, while adhering to transparency sharing of operational resources so as to achieve objectives”.

Concluding, Mr François Ibovi called on partners to remain in touch and strengthen the partnership in order to conquer NTDs in the African Region. Additionally, he recalled that efforts made by institutions, men and women towards making onchocerciasis control a “success story” in Africa was recognized during the 40th anniversary celebration held at the World Bank headquarters in June 2014 in Washington.

EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH OF BMGF REPRESENTATIVE

In her address at the opening of JAF 20, **Dr Julie Jacobson** of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, also speaking on behalf of STH Coalition and the Shisto Alliance, stressed on the need for coalition and coordination, touching on the experiences of the launching of Uniting to Combat NTDs back in 2012 following the London Declaration, which, she said, “Was a way of working differently, working collaboratively at a global level as we work to support endemic countries, we do it in a coordinated and efficient manner, so that we work together to help address the problems.” Dr Jacobson reiterated that this coordinated approach is in line with the WHO Roadmap on NTDs and the World Health Assembly resolutions, and the fact that the JAF is bringing together all of the different stakeholders to work on finding their own solutions to the problems is an important step in defining the future. “The fact that this meeting is bringing together the JAF, the GAELF and the Shisto Alliance all together is an important step forward, signaling our coming together to find how we can do things better in a coordinated manner.”



PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF WORK - DAY 3, WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2014

OPERATIONAL RESEARCH: PROGRESS AND PLANNED

1. Welcome and a look at the operational needs from the country perspective	08:45-09:00
2. How to develop common strategies for joint lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis and STH implementation	09:00-09:15
3. What has been the impact of onchocerciasis treatment on LF and STH?	09:15-09:30
4. What are the best strategies for Onchocerciasis and LF elimination?	09:30-10:00
Roundtable: The role of vector control and IVM in onchocerciasis and LF:	10:00-11:00
Coffe break	11:00-11:30
Onchocerciasis and LF in Loa co-endemic areas	11:30 - 11:50
Macrofilariocides	11:50 - 12:30
GAELF: 15 YEARS ON! NEW MODELS FOR ACHIEVING THE END GAME	
Welcome message	14:00 - 14:10
Introduction to GAELF	14:10 - 14:15
The Global Situation	14:15 - 14:20
15 years of progress (to include something on those countries who have already eliminated, e.g. Mauritius)	14:20 - 14:40
Overview (where are we now)	14:40 - 15:00
Medicines and the supply chain	15:00 - 15:10
Discussions	15:10 - 15:30
Coffee Break	15:30 - 16:00
LF in Africa	16:00 - 18:00

FAC20 : GUIDE ET CONTACTS IMPORTANTS

WHO CONTACT PERSONS

Dr P. M'pele , WHO Representative for Ethiopia	Cel: 0911 202 633
M. P. Lessimi , Operations Officer	Cel: 0935 998 641
Mrs Genet Aweke , Accommodation	Cel: 0911 663 397
Ms Lishar Negussie , Travel	Cel: 0911 627 120
Mrs Loza M Tesfaye , Communication	Cel: 0911 144 194
Dr Chris Mwikisa , Manager Corporate Services	Cel: 0938 058 153
M. Yaovi Aholou , Programme Officer	Cel: 0939 594 779
Mme Diane Mabiala , Travel & Transport	Cel: 0942 220 898

PUBLIC TRANSPORT & TAXIS

Taxis: Yellow taxis are available in front of most of the hotels. Their rates are fixed and receipts are delivered.

Blue Taxis and buses: Kindly avoid blue taxis and buses for security reasons. Pickpockets are frequently found there and the drivers are not always recommended.

UN MEDICAL CLINIC

The UN medical clinic will be available for any medical emergencies. However, participants are recommended to have a medical insurance .

UN SECURITY CONTACTS IN ETHIOPIA

M. Carlos Lopes, Officier Désigné,	Tel: 251 (0) 011 551 1231
M. Eugène Owusu, UNDP,	Tel: 251 (0) 011 551 1025
M. Francis Sikaonga, Conseiller sécurité UNDSS,	Cel: +251 911 511 906
M. Ouseini Ouedraogo, Chef de la section sécurité,	Cel: +251 911 201 802
N° d'urgence (radio room):	Tel: 011 5511726 011 5444428



Representatives from APOC member States (above), donor countries and NGOs (below) gathered around the table to discuss the future of APOC. .



CURRENCY

The currency in Ethiopia is Ethiopian Birr. The foreign currencies should be exchanged only in authorized banks and hotels. Commercial Bank of Ethiopia has a branch near the conference center (ECA campus). ATMs are available at the UN Conference Center and in most hotels.

The currency declaration form should be kept as it could be requested during departure. If at the end of your stay, you still have Birr you may change them into foreign currencies at the airport prior to departure. To do that, further to the currency declaration form you should provide all the exchange receipts. The exchange rate is: **1 USD = 19,474 ETB**

TRANSPORTATION FROM HOTEL TO UNCC

A bus will be assigned to each hotel for participants transportation to the conference center vice versa. A hostess will be in each hotel to assist participants. Bus numbers and pick up hours are as follow :

Sheraton :	Bus n°1	07H30
Hilton :	Bus N°2 / N°2 – 1	07H30
Jupiter:	Bus N°4	08H00
Intercontinental:	Bus N°5; N°5-1; N°5-2	08H00
Radisson/G. Yordanos:	Bus N°3	08H00
Ambassador:	Bus N°7	07H30
Desalegn/Ambassador:	Bus N°6	07H30

Buses will leave UNCC to hotels around 9H00 p.m every day.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Tuesday, 9th December

Ministers forum including all Heads of Delegation will take place at the venue of the meeting (UNCC) and will be followed by a dinner at 6:30 p.m.

You are cordially invited to two additional sessions in Conference Room 2

Wednesday, 10th December starting at 08:45 a.m OPERATIONAL RESEARCH - PROGRESS AND PLANNED

This session will discuss how to develop common strategies for joint onchocerciasis, lymphatic filariasis and STH implementation/elimination. It will address possible treatment strategies in Loa endemic areas and will consider the role of macrofilaricides. A round table will also consider the role of integrated vector management for onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis.

TUESDAY 11th December – 06:00 a. m. followed by a cocktail reception A ROUND-TABLE TO DISCUSS AND ENDORSE THE NEW GLOBAL SCHISTOSOMIASIS ALLIANCE (GSA)

At the table will be representatives from the schistosomiasis community who will discuss the Alliance mandate and ambition to accelerate progress towards the control and elimination of schistosomiasis by supporting the NTD strategic roadmap, the WHO Resolutions and the unprecedented availability of praziquantel.

The moderate for the session is Mr Andrew Jack, who many will know from his highly respected role as the Pharmaceuticals Correspondent at the Financial Times. Andrew has long supported the momentum towards the control and elimination of neglected tropical diseases.