

Uniting Efforts for Innovation, Access and Delivery **Webinar Report**

# Making the Case for Neglected Diseases: Leveraging National Investment Cases to Unlock Financing for Access and Delivery of Health Technologies

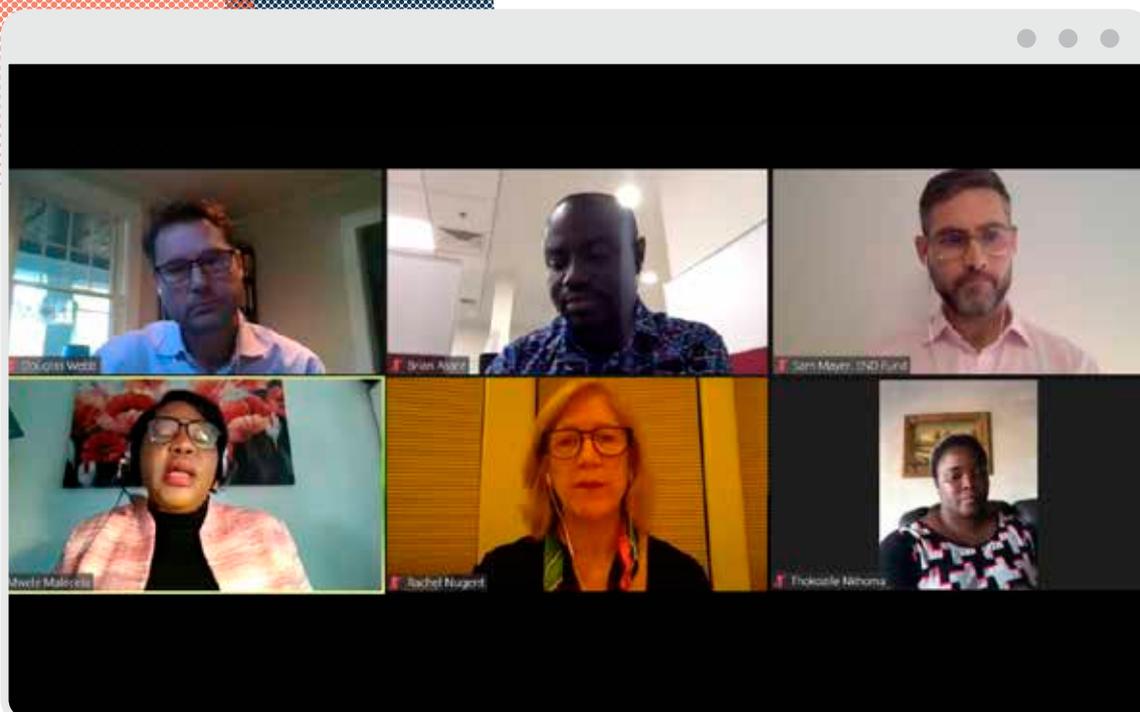
4 November 2020

This report is a summary of the webinar held on 4 November 2020 by Uniting Efforts for Innovation, Access and Delivery (Uniting Efforts) – “Making the Case for Neglected Diseases: Leveraging National Investment Cases to Unlock Financing for Access and Delivery of Health Technologies.”

This was the second webinar in a series of virtual dialogues exploring key issues around innovating for access and delivery of health technologies for neglected diseases. The event launched a new Uniting Efforts knowledge product, a **“Guidance Note for the Development of National Investment Cases for Neglected Diseases,”** developed by Uniting Efforts Consultants, Rachel Nugent and Brian Hutchinson from RTI International. The webinar was attended live by about 115 participants (from the 249 who had registered). The Guidance Note, agenda and bionotes of speakers, PowerPoint presentations, and video recording of the webinar are available [here](#).

The 1.5-hour programme was moderated by Dr. Doug Webb from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and opened with a statement by Dr. Satoshi Ezoe from the Government of Japan on behalf of the three partners of Uniting Efforts. This was followed by a keynote presentation of the discussion paper by Rachel Nugent and a panel with interventions by four experts: Dr. Mwelecele Malecela (Director, World Health Organization (WHO) NTD Department), Dr. Brian Adu Asare (Senior technical Advisor for Pharmacy, Ministry of Health, Government of Ghana), Mr. Sam Mayer (Vice President, Public Affairs, END Fund), and Mrs. Thokozile Phiri Nkhoma (Executive Director, Facilitators of Community Transformation Malawi).

**Dr. Satoshi Ezoe, Director of Global Health Policy Division at MOFA/Government of Japan – introduced by Dr. Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director of HIV, Health and Development at UNDP-** opened the event on behalf of the three partners of Uniting Efforts and set the tone for the dialogue. Dr. Ezoe explained that Uniting Efforts is a global platform launched in January 2019, as a partnership between the Government of Japan, the UNDP-led Access and Delivery Partnership (ADP) and the Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund. Uniting Efforts aims at facilitating dialogue by convening and bringing together multiple stakeholders – from governments, funders, innovators and civil society – to identify challenges, explore opportunities and act on solutions to improve innovation, access and delivery of health technologies for neglected diseases. Dr. Ezoe explained that investment cases have been successfully used for other health priorities and following a request from the participants to the September 2019 Technical Meeting on Health Financing, Uniting Efforts partners decided to commission a Guidance Note to explore the concept and utility of investment cases to increase access to health technologies for neglected diseases. Dr. Ezoe concluded by recognizing that this discussion is now more important than ever, specially as coronavirus disease



**From top, left to right:** Dr. Doug Webb (UNDP HIV, Health and Development (Moderator)), Dr. Brian Adu Asare (Senior technical Advisor for Pharmacy, Ministry of Health, Government of Ghana), Mr. Sam Mayer (Vice President, Public Affairs, END Fund), Dr. Mwelecele Malecela (Director, WHO NTD Department), Dr. Rachel Nugent (RTI International) and Mrs. Thokozile Phiri Nkhoma (Executive Director, Facilitators of Community Transformation Malawi).

(COVID-19) has strained resources globally, and thus home-grown investment cases can be a useful tool to drive government responses to neglected diseases that have been further neglected during this pandemic.

The event moderator, **Dr. Douglas Webb, Team Leader of Health Financing, UNDP HIV, Health and Development** provided guiding thoughts for the webinar, including questions about what the value of investment cases might be, and how investment cases might facilitate linkages with the mechanisms of government decision making, and support strategies to increase evidence generation and linkages between different actors and priorities in the neglected disease and health financing community.

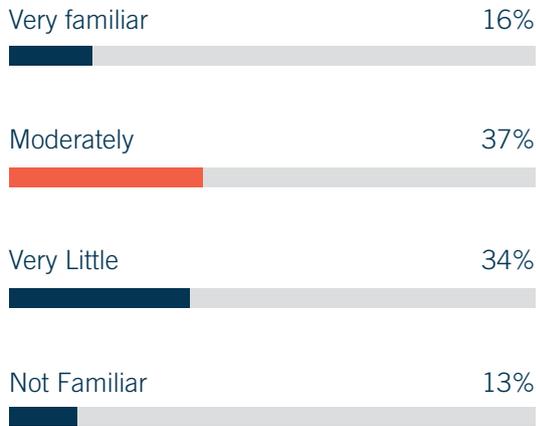
**Dr. Rachel Nugent, Vice President, Director of the Center for Global Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs), RTI International and Uniting Efforts Consultant** led the presentation of the Guidance Note launched at this webinar. Dr. Nugent outlined what an investment case is and is not, and what value a country-level case can add to the neglected diseases strategies, building on the work RTI, UNDP, WHO and other partners have been doing on investment cases for NCDs and other health priorities. Dr. Nugent highlighted the components and process of doing an investment case at national level, and the potential next steps for the neglected diseases community if there is interest in exploring the recommendations of the

Guidance Note as a phase II. For more information on her presentation, please visit the slides of her presentation and the Guidance Note in the Uniting Efforts website.

A panel of four experts followed the launch of the Guidance Note, starting with **Dr. Mwelecele Malecela, Director, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO.** Dr. Malecela reflected on the new WHO Roadmap for NTDs and the importance of both global and national investment cases, as neglected diseases remain poorly funded and we have long to go before reaching ambitious 2030 goals, and ended on the hopeful note that we have an opportunity to align and help countries carry out investment cases for their specific contexts. **Ms. Thokozile Phiri Nkhoma, Executive Director, Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT)** provided a civil society perspective through her experience promoting improved national responses for tuberculosis in Malawi, including the adoption of new technologies. She explained that identifying political/legislative incentives and strategies, and doing cost-benefit analysis was key to successful advocacy, she also recommended strategies for broader multisectoral consultations and engagement. **Mr. Sam Mayer, Vice President, Public Affairs, END Fund** spoke to the importance of messaging and advocacy, and the END Fund's experiences with resource mobilization for neglected diseases, including the successes achieved in Rwanda. Sam presented a recently published analysis

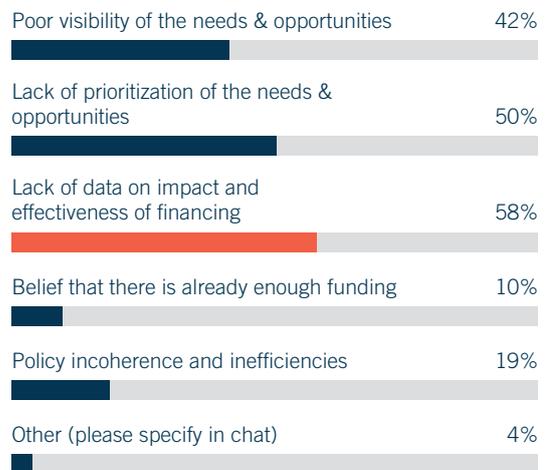
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How familiar were you with the use and impact of national investment cases for health priorities, before this webinar? (please explain experience in the chat)



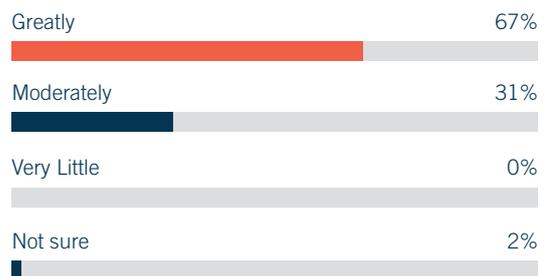
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What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered or expect to encounter when trying to mobilize financing for neglected diseases? (Multiple choice)



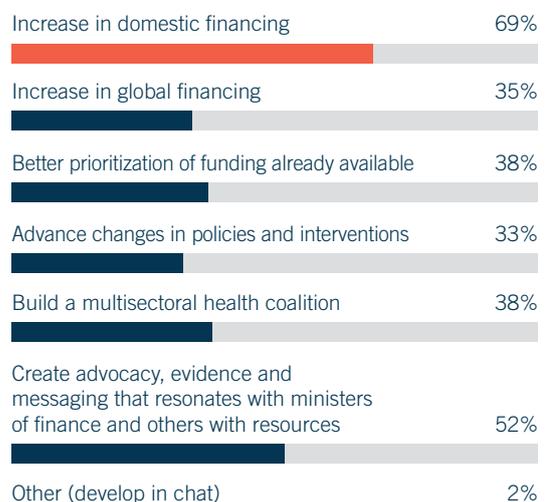
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How helpful do you think national investment cases could be for neglected diseases? (Please develop responses in the chat)



4

Which potential outcome of a national investment case is most important to you? (Multiple choice)



of four-country that includes an economic framing for investing in neglected diseases. **Dr. Brian Adu Asare, Senior Technical Advisor, Pharmacy, Ministry of Health, Ghana** closed the panel reflecting on the national government perspective that currently has an NTD response mostly supported by donor funding, and his thoughts on how investment cases could be useful in Ghana, especially if they are used to generate evidence and integrated within the universal health care (UHC) financing modalities. Though they have not conducted an investment case for NTDs yet, government documentation policies follow similar criteria, and thus the cases may be useful in strengthening country systems and generating economic evaluations.

Throughout the webinar, polling questions were also posed to the audience to stimulate debate and discussion. It was clear from the polling questions that most participants were not very familiar with the use of investment cases prior to the webinar and that they consider investment cases could be greatly useful for a variety of priorities, including to increase domestic financing and to create advocacy, messaging and evidence that resonates with ministers of finance and other entities with resources.

After the expert panel discussion, **Dr. Webb** moderated a brief but lively discussion and question-and-answer (Q&A) session between panelists and all registered participants, highlighting two recurring questions: what is the difference between investment cases for disease programmes in general vs. technology access, and what

is the most valuable aspect of a national investment case for neglected diseases? **Dr. Nugent** commented that the process to develop investment cases allows people to find inefficiencies and integrate services and strategies, noting an example of a country where no one knew they had been paying for certain drugs until the case was done. **Dr. Malecela** echoed this sentiment, explaining that the inherent interlinkages and that the process to develop investment cases can bring together many different stakeholders and issue areas, and be a key opportunity for supporting multisectoral and integrated responses. **Mr. Mayer** spoke to the need to focus on the country context in response to all questions – where a country is in the process of tackling a disease will influence what the investment case looks like and what value it will add. **Dr. Brian Adu Asare** helped summarize what others had discussed, including that investment cases can provide much-needed evidence to inform priorities and decision makers, and that governments and other stakeholders should adjust advocacy and strategy in line with where that evidence leads.

It's clear that many see substantial value in developing national investment cases for neglected diseases, and Uniting Efforts partners were encouraged by the opportunities they present to unite stakeholders and build coalitions around the need to unlock financing for access and delivery of health technologies for neglected diseases.

## Annex : Agenda

### **Making the Case for Neglected Diseases: Leveraging National Investment Cases to Unlock Financing for Access and Delivery of Health Technologies**

4 November 2020, 6 – 7:30 am PST | 9 – 10:30 am EST | 3 – 4:30 pm CET | 11pm – 12:30 am JST

Welcome: Dr. Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director, UNDP HIV, Health and Development & Access and Delivery Partnership (ADP)

Opening Remarks: Dr. Satoshi Ezoe, Director Global Health Policy Division at MOFA/Government of Japan, on behalf of the three partners of Uniting Efforts for Innovation, Access and Delivery

Moderator Introduction: Dr. Douglas Webb, Team Leader on Health Financing, UNDP HIV, Health and Development

Launch of Guidance Note for National Investment Cases: Dr. Rachel Nugent, Vice President, Director of the Center for Global NCDs, RTI International; Uniting Efforts Consultant

Panel:

- Dr. Mwelecele Malecela, Director, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO
- Ms. Thokozile Phiri Nkhoma, Executive Director, Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT), Malawi
- Mr. Sam Mayer, Vice President, Public Affairs, END Fund
- Dr. Brian Adu Asare, Senior Technical Advisor, Pharmacy, Ministry of Health, Ghana

Q&A and Discussion with Registered Participants

Moderator Wrap-up & Concluding remarks: Dr. Douglas Webb, Team Leader on Health Financing, UNDP HIV, Health and Development



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