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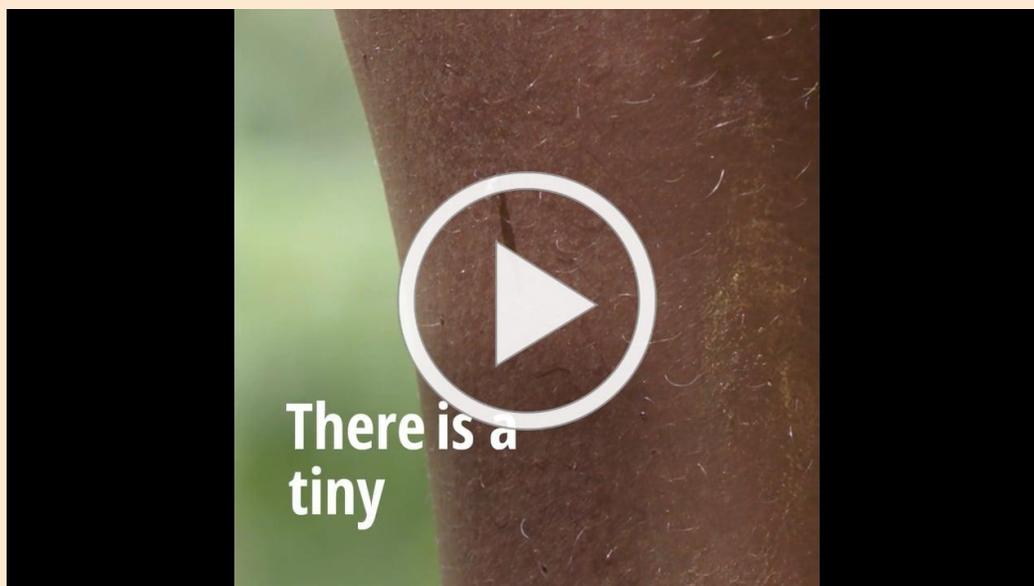


Our many partners in the campaign against river blindness and lymphatic filariasis have shown renewed determination in the first part of 2022. The WHO NTD Road Map 2021-2030 goals remain in sight as we make up for lost time. In this newsletter, you will find the latest news on the road to #EliminateLF and #StampOutOncho.

MDP marks 35 years with a new video series

In October of 1987, Merck & Co., Inc.* committed to donating Mectizan—as much as needed, for as long as needed—with the goal to help control river blindness. In the 35 years since, many lessons have been learned and many milestones have been achieved. We have created a monthly series of short videos to tell the Mectizan Donation Program's story so far. Here is a compilation of the first three videos.

[Watch video](#)



See the monthly videos as they are released throughout our 35th anniversary year and add your comments by following MDP on social media!



Mectizan Expert Committee members and guests log on for a productive spring meeting

The 67th Mectizan Expert Committee/Albendazole Coordination (MEC/AC) meeting was held online April 5-7, 2022, led by chairman Pr. Gilbert Burnham. The meeting began with a moment of silence in memory of the late [Dr. Mwele Malecela](#), who served on the committee in 2001-2004. The nine MEC members then heard reports from MDP, liaison partners, and representatives from Merck, GSK, and Eisai.

The MEC welcomed Dr. Maria Rebollo Polo to her new position as WHO Lead for the Global Program for Onchocerciasis Elimination. Dr. Rebollo outlined her priorities for the coming year to accelerate oncho elimination.

The next MEC/AC meeting will be held in the fall.

New grant to strengthen laboratory capacity to support river blindness elimination in Africa



In March, MDP and Merck & Co., Inc.* announced a \$500,000 donation to strengthen laboratory capacity to support onchocerciasis elimination in Africa in partnership with the WHO's Collaborating Center for Onchocerciasis Diagnostics at the College of Public Health, University of South Florida.

Funds from this grant will be used to help laboratories in Africa to process the required serological and molecular (PCR) diagnostics for onchocerciasis. Specifically, the grant will contribute to the training of laboratory technicians in standard operating procedures, provision of reagents and commodities, and laboratory quality control.

[Click here for more details](#) about the grant and how to apply.

Call for papers: PLOS LF Supplement

The Mectizan Donation Program is working with *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* to publish a special collection of papers on LF elimination in Africa, tentatively titled "Eliminating Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) in Africa: 20+ years of partnership, lessons learned, and progress."

Authors have been invited to submit papers on a wide variety of topics. MDP's Senior Associate Director, Joni Lawrence, is working with PLOS NTDs as guest editor.

Authors may submit papers via the landing page for the collection that will be available soon on the PLOS NTDs website. MDP will circulate a link to the page when it is available. Meanwhile, if you are interested in submitting a paper, please contact Ms. Lawrence at jlawrence@taskforce.org for more information.



Dr. Mark Bradley retires

MDP bids farewell to Dr. Mark Bradley, who has retired after a 35-year career working on a broad range of tropical infectious diseases and global health initiatives.

As Director of the Tropical Disease Programs in the Global Health Unit at GSK, he was responsible for providing leadership to the Tropical Diseases team and advising Global Health leadership on GSK's engagement and investment in tropical diseases. In his role of Scientific Support to Albendazole Donations at GlaxoSmithKline, Mark was a frequent guest at MEC meetings, where he provided valuable insight into GSK's perspective. He joined the 2019 celebration of the elimination of lymphatic filariasis in Lomé, Togo.

We thank him for his contributions in the campaign to eliminate lymphatic filariasis.

Recently published research

Members of the [Mectizan Expert Committee](#) have been busy with research on topics relating to ending neglected tropical diseases. Click on the titles below to read more about each.

Dr. Yaya Ibrahim Coulibaly: "[Comparison of Different Sampling Methods to Catch Lymphatic Filariasis Vectors in a Sudan Savannah Area of Mali](#)," a study comparing the Ifakara tent trap type C (ITTC) and the Biogents sentinel trap (BGST) to the HLC in areas with different vector densities.

Dr. Alison Krentel: "[Accelerating the Uptake of WHO Recommendations for Mass Drug Administration Using Ivermectin, Diethylcarbamazine, and Albendazole](#)," revealing the five key elements required.

Dr. Alison Krentel: "[Lessons from Large-Scale Tolerability and Acceptability Studies of Triple Drug Mass Drug Administration Performed to Support Policy Change and Accelerate Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis](#)," with a focus on practical aspects of the planning and conduct of the large-scale studies that were so critically important for policy change.

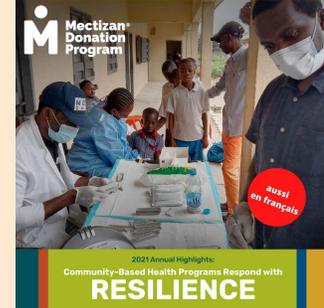
Dr. Sébastien D. S. Pion: "[Impact of Semi-Annual Albendazole on Lymphatic Filariasis and Soil-Transmitted Helminth Infection: Parasitological Assessment after 14 Rounds of Community Treatment](#)." Results of a three-year study in Séké-Pembé, a village in the Republic of the Congo.

More news...

- The Mectizan Donation Program's **2021 Annual Highlights** was recently released. This year's publication contains a message from Dr. Yao Sodahlon, a report on the doses distributed, and news of the

supply chain. It also describes plans for 2022 and beyond as we aim for targets set by the WHO NTD Road Map 2021-2030. [Click to read the Annual Highlights](#) in English and French.

- As previously announced, MDP welcomes [Dr. Abdel Direny](#) to the role of Principal Deputy Director. Dr. Direny serves as the second-in-command to MDP Director Dr. Yao Sodahlon, facilitating access to Merck's Mectizan donation for the elimination of onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis.
- Congratulations to [Dr. Joseph Kamgno](#), recently awarded the prestigious [Christophe Mérieux Prize](#) by the Institut de France for his work at the Center for Research on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (CRFiMT) in Cameroon. The €500,000 prize will contribute to further equipping the CRFiMT for quality research and training young researchers. The CRFiMT was founded in 2005 with funding and facilitation from the Mectizan Donation Program.



Coming soon: a revised Mectizan Donation Agreement with participating countries

A new agreement to receive donated Mectizan will be shared for ratification by our country partners. The agreement, to be in effect starting 2023, clarifies the donation conditions and responsibilities of signatory parties and will be renewed every five years.

Funds are still available for supplies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during Mass Drug Administration with Mectizan

In October 2020, the Mectizan Donation Program and Merck announced that \$500,000 would be made available to support the implementation of precautionary measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) during MDA programs that include the distribution of Mectizan. The funding will be provided as grants to non-governmental organization (NGO) partners working to eliminate onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis.

For the remaining available funds, priority will be given to NGOs working in countries that have not yet received support from this COVID-19 mitigation grant. Visit the Mectizan Donation Program website to access the [grant application](#) and guidelines, or send an email to Senior Associate Director Joni Lawrence (jlawrence@taskforce.org) if you have any questions.

Apply for the
grant

**Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, New Jersey USA, is known as MSD outside the United States and Canada.*

The Mectizan Donation Program is an international program to eliminate river blindness and lymphatic

filariasis primarily funded by Merck, with support from GlaxoSmithKline.

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