



A program at

THE **TASK
FORCE**
FOR
GLOBAL HEALTH

2023 Annual Highlights

Momentum

Message from
Dr. Yao Sodahlon, Director

The Global Reach of the
Mectizan Donation Program

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Message from Dr. Yao Sodahlon, Director

There were a number of exciting developments in 2023, which will continue to drive momentum toward the global elimination of river blindness and lymphatic filariasis. I am delighted to celebrate these developments and share the progress that the Mectizan Donation Program and its partners have made.

The spring 2023 Mectizan Expert Committee (MEC) meeting was held in Amsterdam and Haarlem, the Netherlands, where Mectizan® is manufactured. In 2022, MSD* produced a record one billion tablets for shipment in a single year. The Mectizan Donation Program (MDP), the Mectizan Expert Committee, and other partners visited Haarlem to meet the manufacturing team. We were joined by MSD President and Senior Vice President, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa region, Mr. Renan Özyerli, who congratulated the team responsible for 35+ years of meeting the demand for Mectizan to eliminate onchocerciasis (river blindness) and lymphatic filariasis (LF), noting that the donation is a great example of successful public and private partnership to support disease elimination. Following this visit, MDP produced a [video](#) featuring footage filmed in Haarlem that shows the journey of Mectizan from manufacture to mouth, and the pillars for success.

The fall 2023 MEC meeting was held in Dakar, Sénégal, to celebrate stopping treatment for river blindness in the entire country and entering the three-year post-treatment surveillance phase. One of the key recommendations from the meeting was to create a special intervention zone around Sénégal to prevent reintroduction of infection from neighboring countries where transmission continues. Sénégal has been working on an inter-country consultation framework to share data and information and to develop a synergistic plan of action to monitor vector migration and transmission status in border foci. During the MEC meeting, participants received word that Niger had submitted a revised dossier to WHO for verification of elimination of river blindness. We remain hopeful that Niger will be verified in the very near future, making it the first country in Africa to achieve this significant milestone, once thought impossible.

Following the MEC meeting, participants traveled to Saly, Sénégal, for three important meetings: the inaugural meeting of the Global Onchocerciasis Network for Elimination (GONE), lessons learned from the National Onchocerciasis Committees (NOEC), and the validation of the onchocerciasis elimination mapping protocol, for which MDP provided financial support.

In 2023, over 376 million treatments were approved for river blindness and LF elimination—a slight decrease from 2022 when 378 million treatments were approved. This includes nearly 58 million treatments approved for the implementation of IDA (“triple therapy” with ivermectin [Mectizan], DEC, and albendazole) in 12 countries. Merck has shipped Mectizan for IDA to 21 countries and territories to accelerate the elimination of LF in countries where river blindness is not endemic.

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

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The developments of 2023 will continue to drive momentum toward the global elimination of river blindness and lymphatic filariasis.

In 2023, progress was reported for both diseases. For river blindness, 47 million people no longer need treatment in 13 countries; for LF, over 305 million people no longer need treatment in 20 countries.

In an exciting development, in December during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, partners pledged a \$500 million commitment to expand the Reaching the Last Mile Fund (RLMF) to eliminate river blindness and LF from seven to 39 countries in Africa and Yemen. This support will ensure national elimination programs have the resources needed to distribute Mectizan and albendazole with high coverage, build capacity, strengthen primary health care systems, and support research and innovation.

The MDP-supported lab capacity building grant to the University of South Florida's WHO Collaborating Center (WHOCC) for Onchocerciasis Diagnostics made significant progress in 2023 by supporting Niger, Sénégal, and Tanzania to clear onchocerciasis sample backlogs along with Bénin, Mali, and Togo, which are still in the process of clearing sample

backlogs. The WHOCC also established a quality assurance and control system in supported labs and is working to invite other labs to join the WHOCC lab-supported network.

I am pleased to report that almost all country partners have now signed the new agreement with the Mectizan Donation Program to receive Mectizan for river blindness and LF elimination. The five-year agreement clarifies the conditions of the donation and the roles and responsibilities of the signatories, which will facilitate the supply process and ensure the responsible use of Merck's generous donation of Mectizan. We encourage the remaining countries to sign the new agreement so that they remain on track for eliminating both diseases.

Sadly, the world lost former First Lady Rosalynn Carter in 2023. She was a remarkable woman, humanitarian, and champion for river blindness and LF elimination alongside her husband, Jimmy Carter. The Carters and The Carter Center's dedication to ending these and other debilitating diseases is evident in the progress countries supported by The Carter Center have made. We




Dr. Yao Sodahlon

extend our deepest condolences to our colleagues at The Carter Center and to the Carter family.

On behalf of the MDP team and the Mectizan Expert Committee, I remain committed to ensuring momentum is sustained toward eliminating these two disabling diseases. We are very grateful to the commitment of Merck, GSK, partner countries and communities, the donors, NGOs, and others who are helping to accelerate progress toward achieving the WHO 2030 NTD Road Map goals.

Together we will #StampOutOncho and #EliminateLF!



Dr. Yao Sodahlon, Director
Mectizan Donation Program

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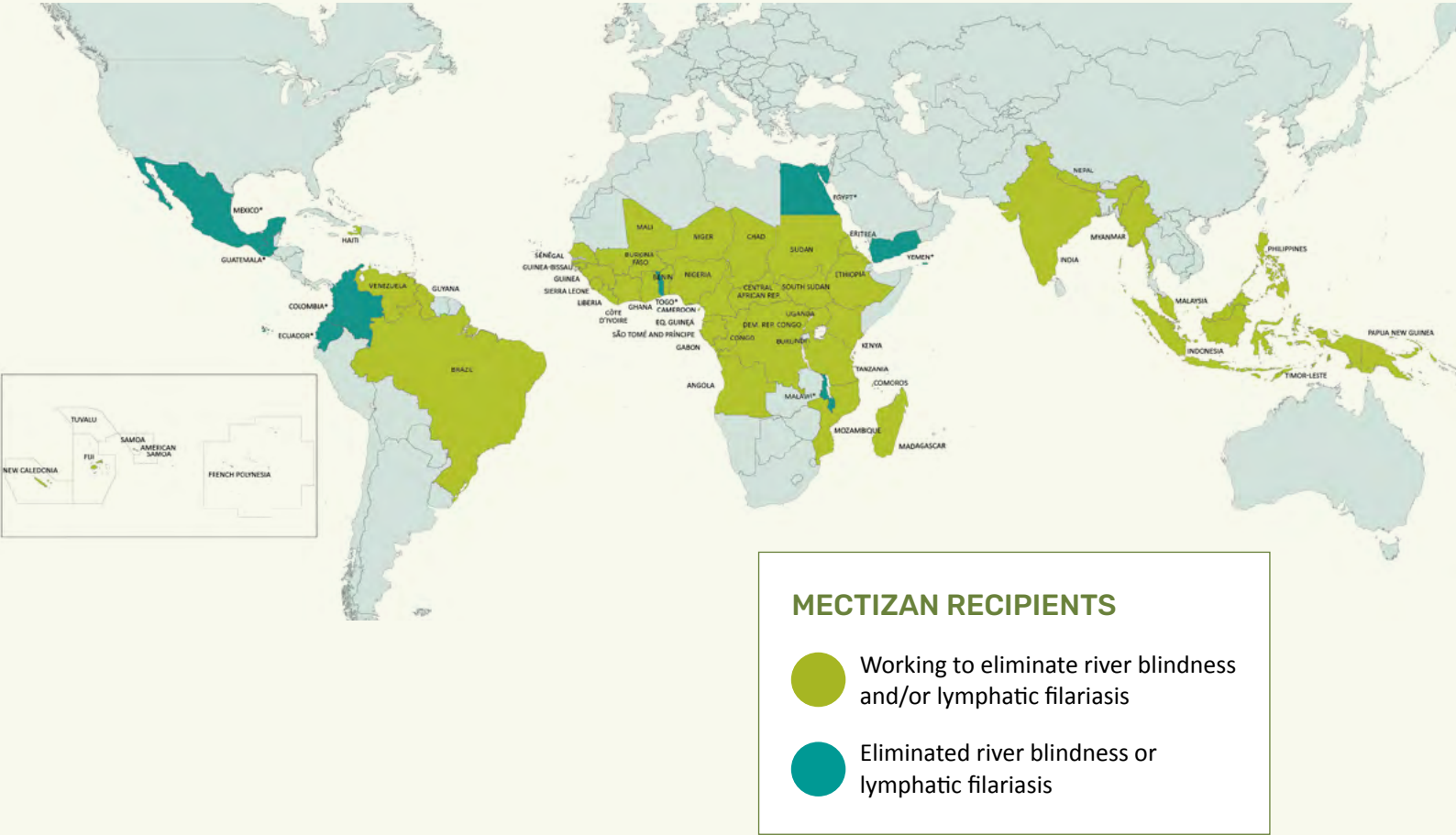
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The Global Reach of the Mectizan Donation Program

Since 1987, Mectizan has been donated for mass drug administration to eliminate river blindness and lymphatic filariasis in 58 countries and territories.



*One or both diseases eliminated.

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2023 ELIMINATION PROGRESS—OVERVIEW



13.1*
billion

**Mectizan tablets
shipped from
1988 to 2023**

5.5
billion

**Mectizan treatments
approved from
1988 to 2023**

** Equivalent of 4.66 billion treatments*

Pharmacist Bosco Chammanja pulls Mectizan from the shelf of Thyolo District Hospital pharmacy in Malawi.
(Photo by Peter Ngwale)

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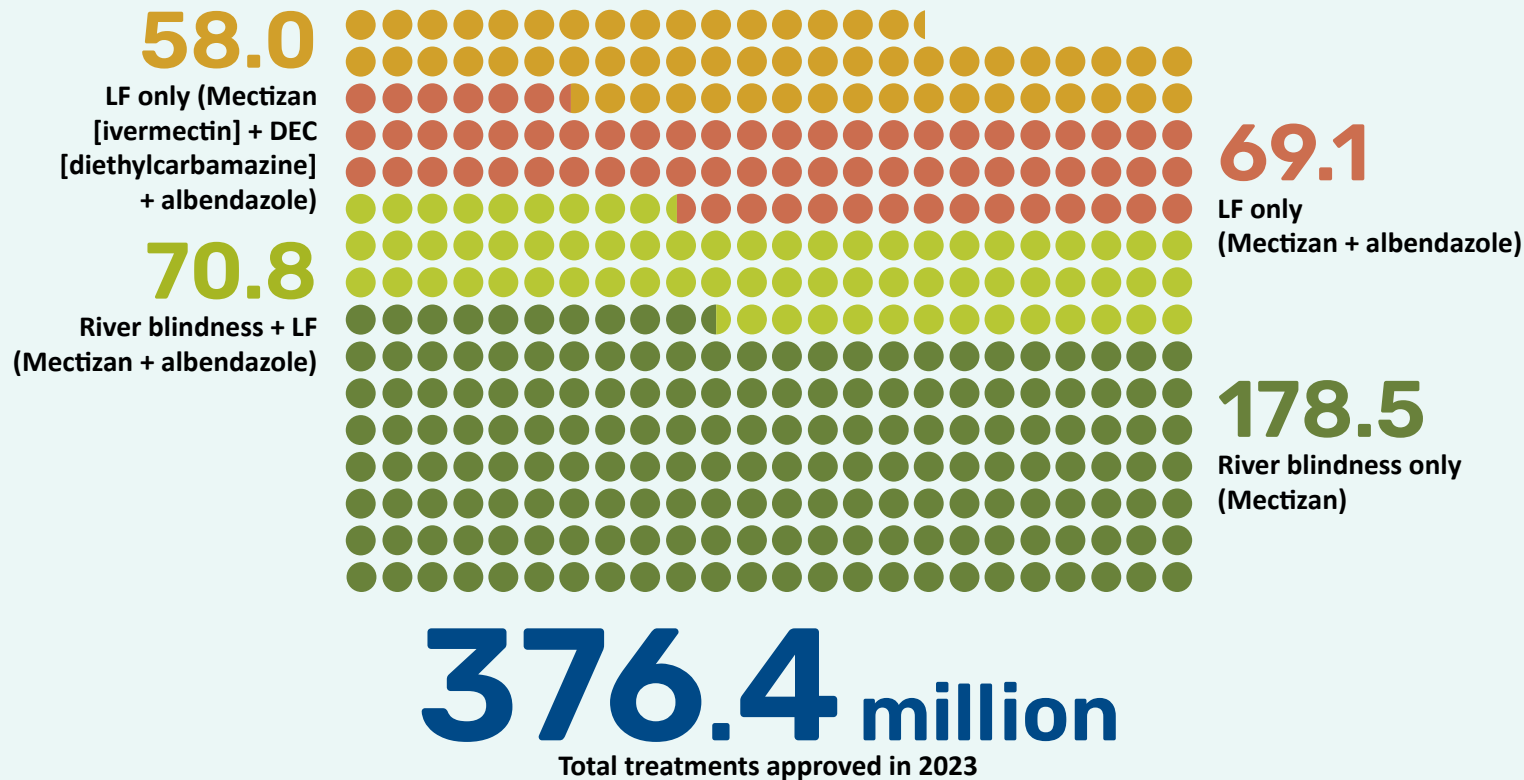
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2023 ELIMINATION PROGRESS—OVERVIEW

Progress Toward River Blindness and Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination

In 2023, the Mectizan Donation Program approved 376.4 million Mectizan treatments for mass drug administration (MDA) to eliminate onchocerciasis (river blindness) and lymphatic filariasis (LF) in 34 countries and territories around the world.

Figure 1: Total treatments approved 2023 (in millions)



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2023 ELIMINATION PROGRESS—OVERVIEW

As of 2023, more than 5.5 billion Mectizan treatments have been approved by the Mectizan Donation Program and 13 billion tablets shipped by Merck & Co., Inc. to 58 countries and territories.

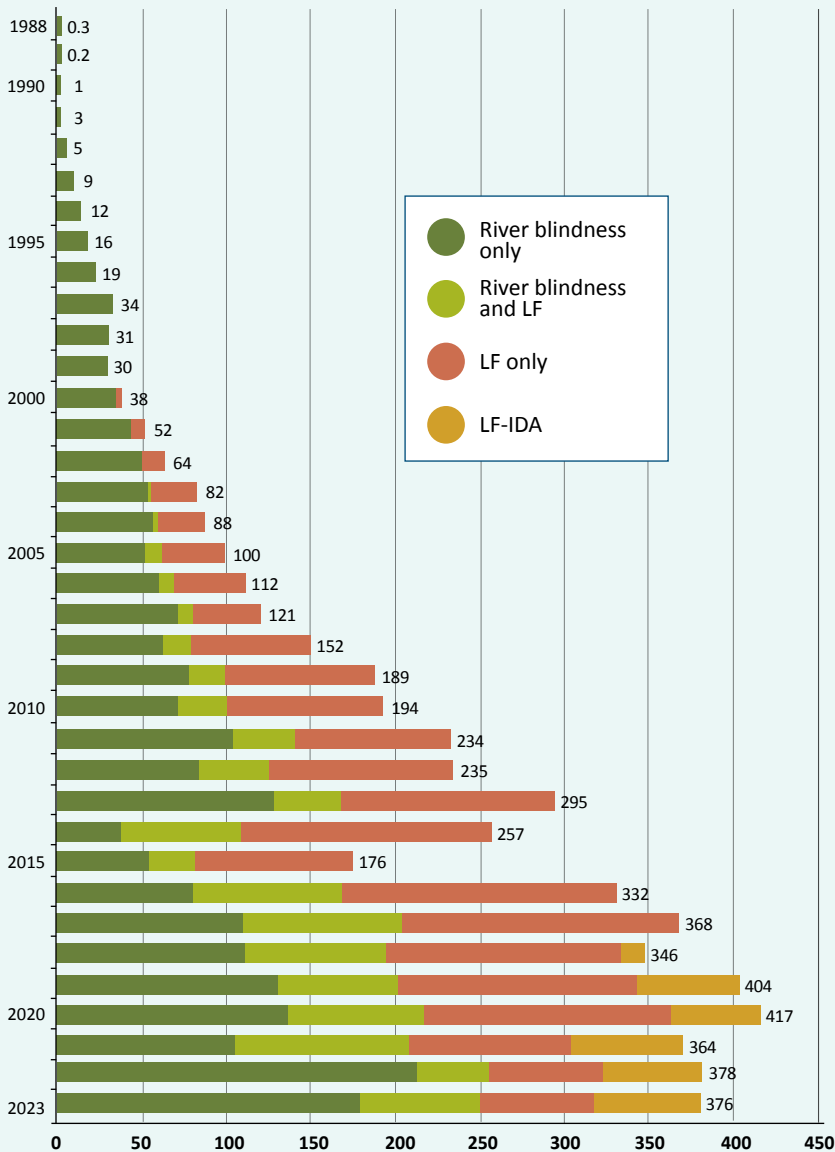
Momentum is growing as increasing numbers of people no longer need treatment. This downscaling is a strong indicator of progress toward the elimination of these diseases. For river blindness, 46.6 million people no longer need treatment in 13 countries. For LF, more than 305 million people no longer need treatment in 20 countries where LF and river blindness are co-endemic.

The expansion of the donation in 1998 to include LF elimination, and again in 2017 to accelerate LF elimination in eligible non-river blindness endemic countries, along with the expansion of the national programs, led to annual increases in the number of Mectizan tablets shipped by Merck, reaching over one billion tablets again in 2023.



Malawi health worker Harold Kaiya delivers Mectizan for mass drug administration. (Photo by Peter Ngwale)

Figure 2: Number of Treatments Approved 1988–2023 (in millions)



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2023 ELIMINATION PROGRESS—RIVER BLINDNESS (ONCHOCERCIASIS)

River Blindness Elimination in 2023



In 2023, 249.2 million treatments were approved for elimination of river blindness in 18 African countries, plus Venezuela (**Figure 3**). This includes 17.6 million treatments approved for the implementation of twice-per-year treatment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Togo, and Venezuela.

Downscaling: By the end of 2023, more than 46 million people in 13 countries in Africa and the Americas were living in areas where transmission is suspected to have been interrupted or eliminated; therefore treatment with Mectizan is no longer needed. Of these, 14.4 million people remain under treatment with Mectizan and albendazole for the elimination of LF. Post-treatment surveillance for river blindness will begin in these communities when they pass the transmission assessment surveys required to determine when treatment for LF can be stopped.

Table 1 shows the population for whom treatment for onchocerciasis has been stopped since transmission is suspected to have been either interrupted or eliminated (as of December 2023).

Table 1: Mectizan Treatment Stopped for Onchocerciasis

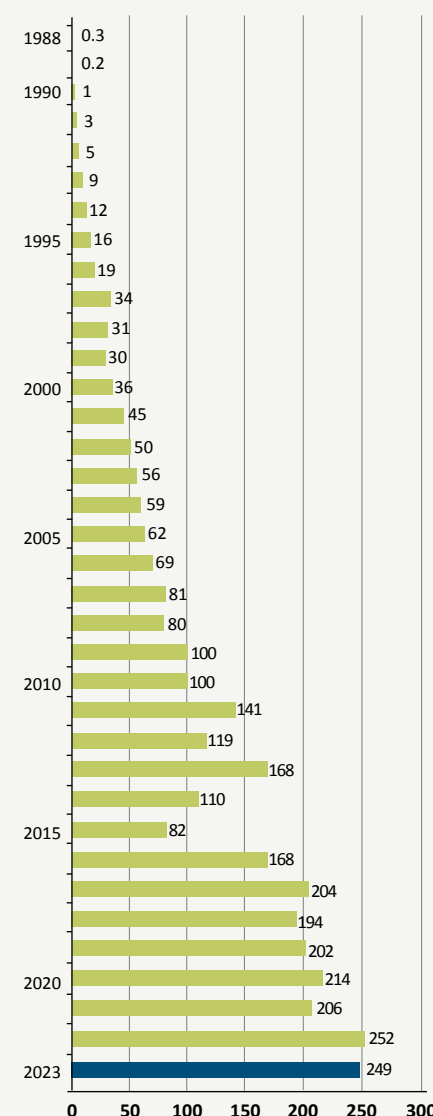
Country	Onchocerciasis foci no longer needing treatment	Total onchocerciasis foci/districts	Population in onchocerciasis foci where treatment has stopped	Population in onchocerciasis foci where treatment has stopped but still under treatment for LF
Colombia*	1	1	1,515	
Ecuador*	1	1	30,015	
Equatorial Guinea	4	4	275,591	
Ethiopia	26	268	2,755,217	85,845
Guatemala*	4	4	286,521	
Mali	2	22	986,160	0
Mexico*	3	3	227,118	
Nigeria**	127	517	36,166,862	14,203,363
Sénégal	8	8	608,762	142,861
Sudan*	2	4	356,043	0
Togo	5	38	532,852	0
Uganda***	15	17	4,293,469	0
Venezuela	2	3	122,128	
Total	200	890	46,642,253	14,432,069

* In the Americas, Sudan, and Uganda, the geographical unit is a focus rather than a district.

** Hotspot detected in two LGAs in Enugu State (Nkanu East, Uzo-Uwani). The National Onchocerciasis Elimination Committee recommended continuing treatment for two more years.

*** Treatment stopped in part of the northern focus: total population=1,121,520

Figure 3: Treatments Approved for River Blindness, 1988–2023 (in millions)



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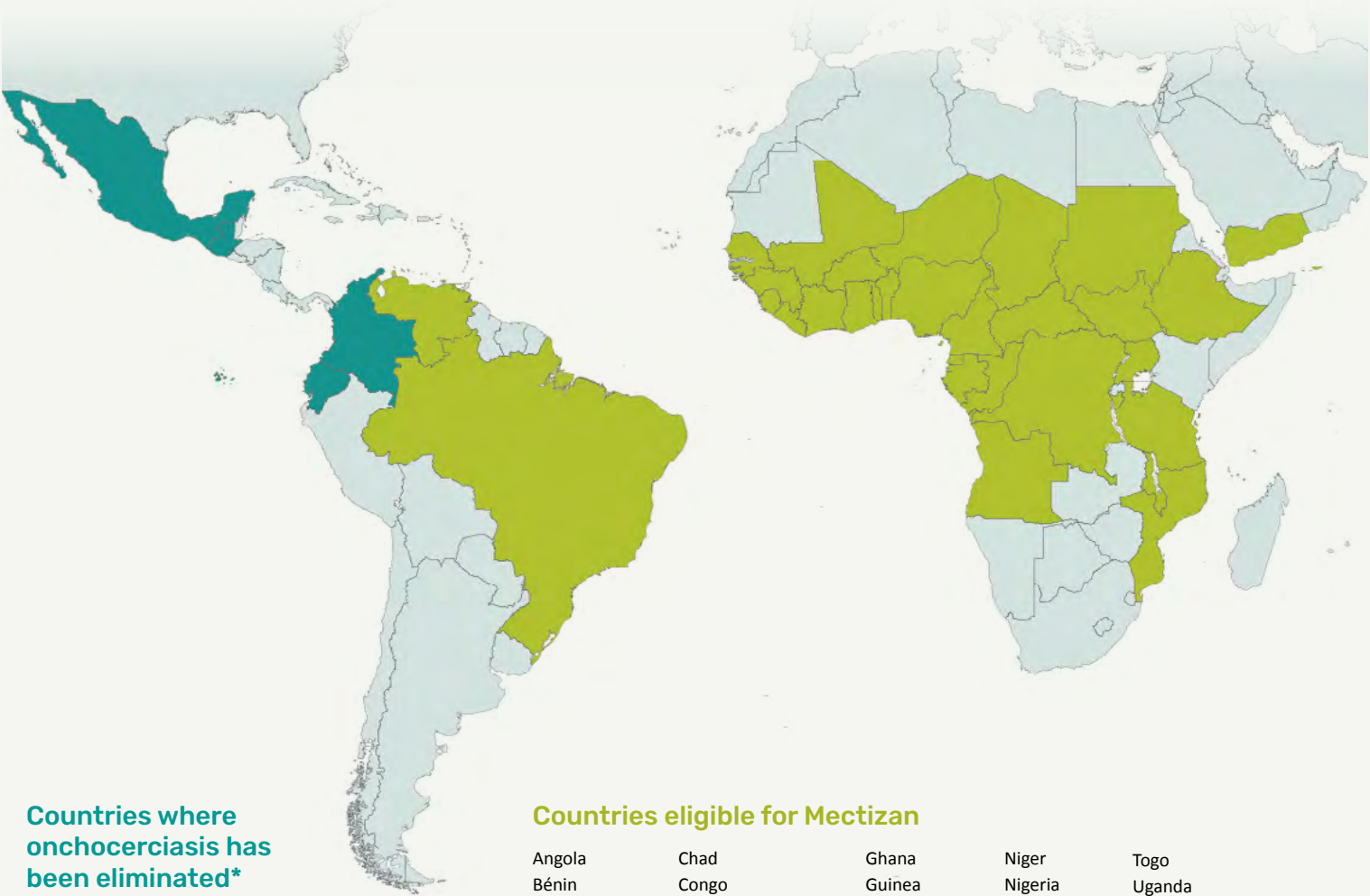
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Onchocerciasis-Endemic Countries



Countries where onchocerciasis has been eliminated*

- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Guatemala
- Mexico

* Elimination of transmission

Countries eligible for Mectizan

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Angola | Chad | Ghana | Niger | Togo |
| Bénin | Congo | Guinea | Nigeria | Uganda |
| Brazil | Côte d'Ivoire | Guinea-Bissau | Sénégal | Venezuela |
| Burkina Faso | Democratic Republic of the Congo | Liberia | Sierra Leone | Yemen |
| Burundi | Equatorial Guinea | Malawi | South Sudan | |
| Cameroon | Ethiopia | Mali | Sudan | |
| Central African Republic | Gabon | Mozambique | Tanzania | |

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2023 ELIMINATION PROGRESS—LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination in 2023

In 2023, 197.8 million treatments were approved for LF elimination worldwide. Of these, 139.9 million were approved in African countries where Mectizan and albendazole are co-administered, and 58 million were approved in countries where river blindness is not endemic to implement triple therapy—also known as IDA—with Mectizan (ivermectin), diethylcarbamazine (DEC), and albendazole.



Application approvals for LF elimination in onchocerciasis-endemic countries under treatment with Mectizan and albendazole

In Africa where Mectizan (donated by Merck & Co., Inc.) and albendazole (donated by GSK) are co-administered for LF elimination, the 139.9 million treatments approved in 21 countries included 70.8 million Mectizan treatments for distribution in communities where LF and river blindness are co-endemic and 69.1 million treatments for distribution in communities endemic for LF only.

Bénin, Cameroon, Mali, and Uganda are under the five-year post-treatment surveillance phase to ensure that LF has been eliminated as a public health problem based on WHO requirements for validation. They are well on their way to joining Malawi, Togo, and Yemen in successfully eliminating LF as a public health problem.



Application approvals for the implementation of IDA (ivermectin, DEC, and albendazole) for LF elimination in countries where onchocerciasis is not co-endemic

In addition to the unlimited donation of Mectizan for the global elimination of river blindness, and the elimination of LF in African countries and Yemen co-endemic for river blindness, in 2017 Merck committed up to 100 million Mectizan treatments annually through 2025 for the implementation of triple therapy to accelerate LF elimination in countries where river blindness is not endemic.

A total of 58 million treatments were approved in 2023 for 12 implementing countries and territories: American Samoa, Fiji, French Polynesia, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Nepal, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa. There are now 21 countries that have adopted IDA as a strategy to eliminate LF.



Morbidity management for LF in Ethiopia.
(Photo from The END Fund by Mo Scarpelli)

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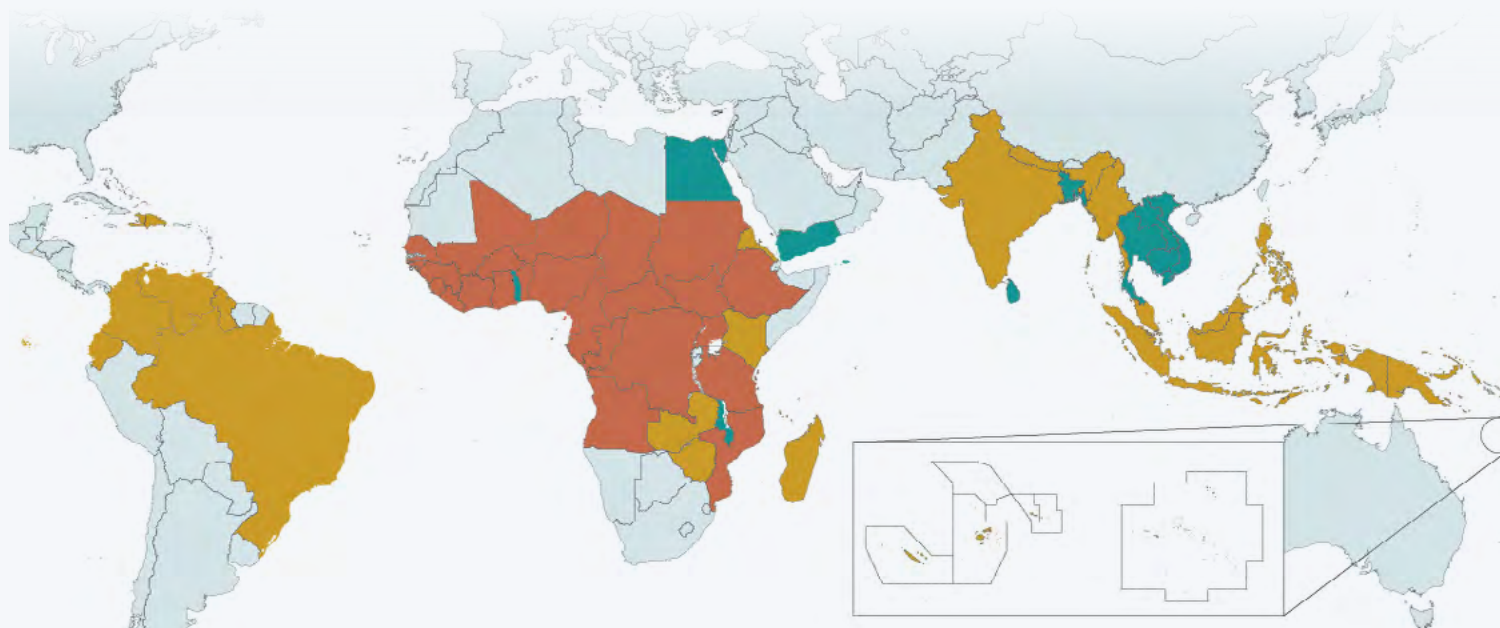
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Lymphatic Filariasis—Endemic Countries



Countries where LF has been eliminated*

Bangladesh	Palau
Cambodia	Sri Lanka
Cook Islands	Thailand
Egypt	Togo
Kiribati	Tonga
Lao PDR	Vanuatu
Malawi	Vietnam
Maldives	Wallis and Futuna
Marshall Islands	Yemen
Niue	

* Elimination as a public health problem

Countries eligible for Mectizan and albendazole

Angola	Equatorial Guinea	Niger
Bénin	Ethiopia	Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Gabon	Sénégal
Cameroon	Ghana	Sierra Leone
Central African Republic	Guinea	South Sudan
Chad	Guinea-Bissau	Sudan
Congo	Liberia	Tanzania
Côte d'Ivoire	Mali	Uganda
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mozambique	

Countries & territories eligible for Mectizan, DEC, and albendazole (IDA)*

<i>American Samoa</i>	<i>Guyana</i>	<i>New Caledonia</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Haiti</i>	<i>Papua New Guinea</i>
<i>Brunei Darussalam</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Philippines</i>
<i>Comoros</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Samoa</i>
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	<i>Kenya</i>	<i>São Tomé and Príncipe</i>
<i>Eritrea</i>	<i>Madagascar</i>	<i>Timor-Leste</i>
<i>Federated States of Micronesia</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Tuvalu</i>
<i>Fiji</i>	<i>Myanmar</i>	<i>Zambia</i>
<i>French Polynesia</i>	<i>Nepal</i>	<i>Zimbabwe</i>

* Countries in italics have been approved for Mectizan

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Program Downscaling for Lymphatic Filariasis

The number of people who no longer need treatment with Mectizan and albendazole for LF elimination increased from 265.4 million in 2022 to 304.6 million in 20 countries (**Table 2**). Among those, approximately 97.1 million will continue to receive Mectizan for river blindness.

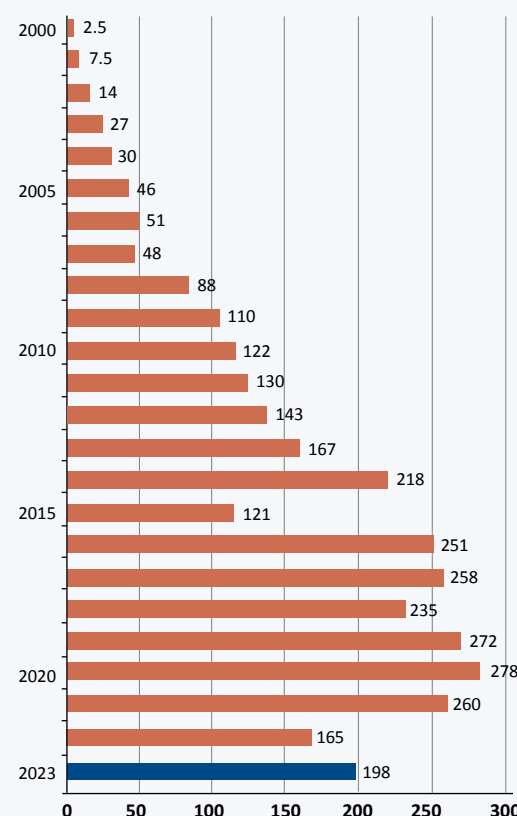
Table 2: Mectizan + Albendazole Treatment Stopped for Lymphatic Filariasis

Country	LF districts no longer needing treatment	Total LF districts	Population in LF districts no longer needing treatment	Population still receiving treatment for onchocerciasis in districts where LF treatment is stopped
Bénin**	48	48	5,880,719	3,345,362
Burkina Faso	62	72	20,629,534	240,978
Cameroon**	146	146	19,156,255	12,383,078
Côte d'Ivoire	98	99	25,769,851	21,302,831
DRC	60	245	14,224,840	8,802,108
Ethiopia	47	111	3,144,585	1,618,665
Ghana	110	120	15,191,753	4,061,845
Guinea-Bissau	44	109	1,167,350	311,328
Liberia	8	13	3,490,096	3,490,096
Malawi*	28	28	19,396,015	3,236,897
Mali**	75	75	24,301,150	7,034,518
Mozambique	62	114	12,981,683	0
Niger	55	56	21,332,209	0
Nigeria	156	583	41,466,919	14,481,134
Sénégal	41	51	9,120,027	0
Sierra Leone	15	16	9,342,890	7,068,534
Tanzania	112	119	37,305,570	7,698,696
Togo*	9	9	1,729,405	1,276,212
Uganda**	69	69	18,849,812	660,448
Yemen*	11	11	130,968	79,816
Total	1,256	2,094	304,611,632	97,092,546

* Validated by WHO as having achieved elimination as public health problem.

** All endemic districts are under post-treatment surveillance (PTS).

Figure 4: Treatments Approved for Lymphatic Filariasis, 2000–2023 (in millions)



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A Visit to Thank the MSD Staff at the Mectizan Factory in the Netherlands

In 2022, the MSD factory in Haarlem, the Netherlands, produced a record one billion tablets in a single year. This was also achieved in 2023.

The Mectizan Donation Program, Mectizan Expert Committee, and meeting participants visited the manufacturing facility in April 2023 to congratulate the MSD team for their commitment and to tour the facility.

MSD President, SVP, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa region Renan Özyerli joined the group to congratulate the employees for their dedication to meeting the ever-increasing demand for Mectizan for more than 35 years.



Learn about the production and journey of Mectizan in this new film.



(Photos by Michel Campfens)

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Cross-border Collaboration Is Key to River Blindness Elimination

Sénégal stopped treatment for river blindness country-wide in 2022 and has begun the three-year post-treatment surveillance (PTS) phase for verifying elimination of river blindness.

If Sénégal passes the required evaluations at the end of PTS, it will be on track to submit an elimination dossier to WHO for verification of elimination of transmission. To be verified as free of river blindness by WHO, countries must demonstrate they do not share any active transmission foci with neighboring countries.

The fall 2023 Mectizan Expert Committee meeting, held in Dakar, provided an excellent opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by countries like Sénégal. Despite making great progress, these countries are at risk of recrudescence while neighboring countries are still fighting river blindness. There is a need for robust monitoring and cross-border collaboration to prevent cross-border transmission from neighboring countries where transmission is ongoing.

To protect Sénégal's achievement of stopping treatment, the Mectizan Expert Committee recommended that a special intervention zone be created on the borders between Sénégal and its neighboring countries—Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Mali—to prevent reintroduction of infection.

In 2023, MDP further addressed the issue by supporting collaboration between the National Onchocerciasis Elimination Committees (NOECs) in Guinea and Nigeria. MDP will continue to support NOEC meetings in 2024 to foster collaboration between countries.



The Shire River borders Malawi and Mozambique; the two countries must work together to achieve success in elimination. (Photo by Virginia Murray)

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Getting Mectizan to the End of the Road in the Amazon

The ministries of health in Brazil and Venezuela and a coalition led by The Carter Center’s Onchocerciasis Elimination Program for the Americas (OEPA) truly go the extra mile to deliver Mectizan to the Yanomami communities who live deep in the Amazonian jungle.

An estimated 35,000 people inhabit the Yanomami Focus Area (YFA) along the border between Brazil and Venezuela—the last endemic focus in the Americas.

These remote communities are most easily reached by helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft—however, health workers also travel by boat and on foot, for weeks at a time, to deliver Mectizan and other health services. The journey is dangerous. Health workers face violence at the hands of illegal gold miners and dangerous wildlife during the arduous trek in the rainforest.

The ministries of health in Brazil and Venezuela work closely with indigenous health agents (IHA) to deliver biannual Mectizan and other primary health care interventions. Collaboration between the two countries is key as the focus is on the border. The entire focus on both sides must be clear of river blindness transmission before Brazil and Venezuela can be verified by WHO for eliminating the disease. Cross-border collaboration between both countries will also help ensure the target of 85% treatment coverage for the entire focus is achieved; a critical target for reaching elimination.

In 2023 MDP approved 84,104 Mectizan treatments for distribution twice a year in 2024 and 2025 in the YFA. Despite setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic, coverage is on the rise. According to the [WHO Weekly Epidemiological Record](#), 37 high-priority communities in the focus achieved 95% coverage in the first quarter and 86% coverage in the second.

The Mectizan Donation Program thanks the ministries of health, the health workers, and other partners for their commitment to eliminating this disease from the Americas.



(Photos by Oscar Noya Alarcón)

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Activities of the Mectizan Expert Committee

The 70th meeting of the Mectizan Expert Committee (MEC) was held October 30–31, 2023, in Dakar, Sénégal, to recognize the country for stopping treatment for river blindness in all endemic communities.

The Mectizan Expert Committee/Albendazole Coordination (MEC/AC) is the independent technical body of experts providing oversight for the donation of Mectizan and, for lymphatic filariasis elimination, coordination of the co-distribution of Mectizan and albendazole (donated by GSK). The MEC/AC meets in the spring and fall of each year.

In 2023, the MEC/AC included: MEC Chair, Prof. Gilbert Burnham (USA); LF expert Prof. Yaya Coulibaly (Mali); parasitologist and LF expert Prof. Monique Dorkenoo-Agbeko (Togo); LF expert Dr. Ramaiah Kapa (India); behavioral health scientist Dr. Alison Krentel (Canada); parasitologist Dr. Tom Nutman (USA); entomologist, parasitologist, and onchocerciasis expert Prof. B.E.B. Nwoke (Nigeria); and parasitologist and LF and onchocerciasis expert Dr. Sébastien Pion (France).

The MEC was attended by representatives from WHO headquarters and the regional offices, country representatives, donors, the Centers for Disease Control, moxidectin stakeholders, and NGOs.

Key recommendations covered a wide range of operational issues including a need for clear guidelines for stopping LF treatment in districts suspected to be endemic for river blindness, strategies to improve cross-border collaboration, the need to support countries failing transmission assessment surveys due to low coverage, ongoing engagement with partner countries to address high clearance fees, and expanding lab capacity across Africa.

Discussions were held on what's needed for successful field implementation of moxidectin for river blindness and LF elimination, including access to moxidectin, cost implications, and research needs.

The MEC supported the revisions to the WHO guidelines for LF elimination, particularly the threshold reduction from 2% to 1% for stopping treatment, noting that the conservative approach will reduce the risk for post-intervention recrudescence. The MEC also noted the great progress made by WHO to develop river blindness elimination manuals and guidelines to streamline elimination activities.

To prevent cross-border transmission from neighboring countries where river blindness transmission is ongoing, the MEC recommended that a special intervention zone be created on the borders of Sénégal shared with Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Mali to prevent reintroduction of infection. It was noted that Sénégal has been working with neighboring countries to monitor vector migration and transmission status in border foci.



MEC members and guests in Dakar.

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Partners Pledge \$500 Million to Fight River Blindness and LF

In December 2023, a landmark \$777 million pledge was announced for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai.



(Photo by COP28 / Christopher Edralin)

The pledge includes a \$500 million commitment to expand the efforts of the Reaching the Last Mile Fund to eliminate river blindness and LF from seven to 39 countries in Africa and Yemen.

This support will ensure national elimination programs have the resources needed to implement interventions to fight these diseases, build capacity, strengthen primary health care systems, and support research and innovation.

This generous \$500 million commitment pledged by partners including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Arab Emirates, the Governments of Sierra Leone and Tanzania, and many other donors will enable endemic African countries and Yemen to improve the lives of over 350 million people by 2030 by eliminating these debilitating diseases.

The announcement was made during COP28 as the vectors for these diseases are highly sensitive to the impact of climate change, creating the need to reinforce efforts to eliminate them.

The Mectizan Donation Program's Dr. Yao Sodahlon stated, "This powerful commitment will go a long way toward helping us to leverage Merck's historic donation, and get Mectizan to everyone who needs it—despite challenges that develop due to climate change."

Message from
Dr. Yao Sodahlon, Director

The Global Reach of the
Mectizan Donation Program

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What's Ahead for MDP

MDP is committed to providing Mectizan for river blindness and lymphatic filariasis elimination in our partner countries—as much as needed, for as long as needed.

In 2024 we will continue to work with our partners at the WHO Collaborating Center for Onchocerciasis Diagnostics at the University of South Florida to strengthen laboratory capacity in support of river blindness elimination in Africa. Funds from this grant are being used to help laboratories process diagnostics for river blindness, an important step in the elimination process. The grant also funds training, quality control, and supplies to help build lab capacity in river blindness endemic countries.

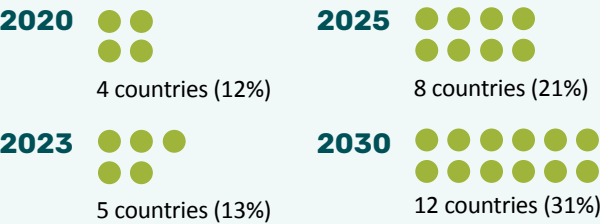
In the coming year we anticipate achieving the milestone of five billion Mectizan treatments shipped. We look forward to celebrating more countries as they progress toward eliminating these debilitating diseases. We will continue to work alongside our partners, collaborating to identify and address problems, develop innovative solutions, create new synergies, and work together for equitable and sustainable access to medicines and health care in our partner countries.

Future Milestones

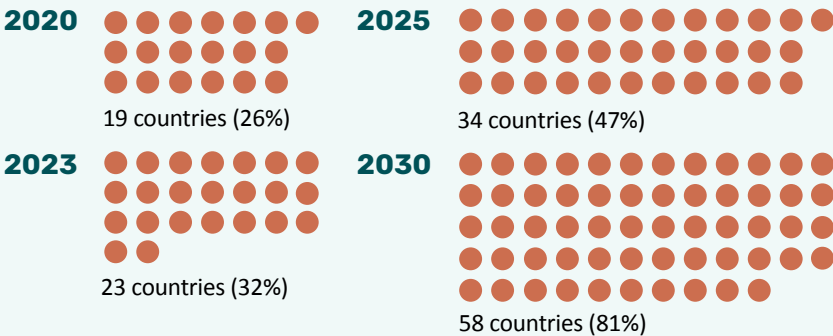
The World Health Organization’s Neglected Tropical Diseases Road Map 2021-2030 provides targets and milestones for the elimination of river blindness and lymphatic filariasis. We remain confident that we can meet the WHO targets and maintain momentum toward eliminating river blindness and lymphatic filariasis.



ONCHO GOALS: The 2021-2030 WHO NTD Road Map targets for verification of elimination of river blindness transmission:



LF GOALS: The 2021-2030 WHO NTD Road Map targets for validation of elimination of LF as a public health problem:



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A program at

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The Mectizan Donation Program is an international program to eliminate river blindness and lymphatic filariasis, primarily funded by Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., U.S.A.,* with support from GlaxoSmithKline.

Through the Mectizan Donation Program, Merck & Co., Inc. donates Mectizan® for the elimination of the transmission of onchocerciasis and for the elimination of lymphatic filariasis (LF) as a public health problem. For the elimination of LF where onchocerciasis is co-endemic in Africa and Yemen, Mectizan is co-administered with albendazole, donated by GSK. In countries eligible for “triple therapy,” Mectizan and albendazole are co-administered with diethylcarbamazine (DEC) to accelerate LF elimination in some communities.

The Mectizan Donation Program is a program at The Task Force for Global Health.

All photos ©Mectizan Donation Program unless otherwise noted.

* Merck & Co., Inc. is known as MSD outside the USA and Canada.

On the front cover: Armed with dose poles, medications, educational materials, and anti-malaria bed nets, a group of Community Drug Distributors in Bayan Dutse, Nigeria, heads out to work. (Photo by William Nsai)

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