

## **Fact Sheet**

### **2022 Guinea Worm Summit & Abu Dhabi Declaration**

- The 2022 Guinea Worm Summit is a timely opportunity to build on the momentum of the recent announcement of the lowest annual human case total ever recorded, and to elevate the global urgency of eradicating Guinea worm disease. In 2021, only 15 human cases were reported in four countries. The priority of the Summit is to spotlight country leadership and secure recommitments from the final Guinea worm-endemic countries (Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan) and pre-certification countries (DRC, Sudan), as well as Cameroon, a country affected by cross-border infection, to expedite the eradication endgame. The three-day event will consist of a programmatic cross-country meeting among Ministers of Health from affected countries, private bilateral meetings with country delegations, and a public signing ceremony to officially launch the *Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Eradication of Guinea Worm Disease*. Guinea worm is a parasitic, neglected disease.
- Country commitments will be laid out in the *Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Eradication of Guinea Worm Disease*, a document which has been drafted in close consultation with endemic country leaders, national program leads, The Carter Center, and the World Health Organization. The Declaration stresses the importance of:
  - Bold political, technical and financial commitments at all levels of government, from heads of state to community-level leaders, in order to expedite eradication efforts;
  - Provision of safe drinking water to stop the spread of Guinea worm disease in remaining endemic villages and further strengthen local health systems;
  - Collaboration and swift and transparent communication among countries in cross-border transmission zones, and efforts to ensure safety and continuity of eradication programs in areas of conflict or civil unrest;
  - Investments in community health workers, intensified disease surveillance, and interventions including community-targeted education and awareness efforts, use of pipe filters and proactive tethering of dogs and cats at-risk to prevent further spread of the disease and accelerate eradication.
- In line with the WHO-endorsed 2030 Roadmap on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), the Abu Dhabi Declaration recognizes the intensive efforts and resources required to interrupt human and animal transmission in all countries by 2026 and achieve global eradication by 2030. The Declaration signing also takes place in the lead up to the Kigali Declaration on NTDs at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in June 2022,

which aims to mobilize political will and secure commitments to achieve the SDG3 and WHO targets on ending all 20 NTDs.

- The 2022 Guinea Worm Summit is being held in Abu Dhabi reflects the unwavering commitment of the UAE and its leadership to ending Guinea worm disease, a commitment that began more than 30 years ago with a partnership between the UAE's founder, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and former US President Jimmy Carter, and continues today with ongoing support from His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.
- The Guinea Worm Summit will celebrate the achievement of the lowest case total in history, which has been made possible by community-driven programs, which have remained 90% operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The achievement reflects the success of long term partnerships and a steadfast commitment to the last mile of eradication, which is the longest and most difficult.
- The theme for the Guinea Worm Summit is "Mission to Zero," reflecting the dedicated efforts and shared commitment of all who will convene in Abu Dhabi for the event to seeing the end of Guinea worm disease.

### **The Carter Center**

The Carter Center is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization which has helped to improve life for people in over 80 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. The Center works closely with ministries of health and local communities, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and many others. [www.CarterCenter.org](http://www.CarterCenter.org), Facebook and Twitter @CarterCenter

### **Case studies and multimedia:**

- [Video](#): Ethiopia has reduced the ancient affliction of Guinea worm disease to a small handful of human cases. Now the focus is on keeping dogs free of infection, and in at least one village, young people are leading the way.
- [Video](#): Thousands of village volunteers in Chad play an integral role in the fight against guinea worm disease by providing free first aid and health education, and immediately

reporting new cases to public health authorities. They do this to protect their neighbors and communities from this painful, parasitic disease.

- [Article](#): Regina Lotubai Lomare Lochilangole is a natural born motivator. She created an original song and dance to teach her South Sudan community about Guinea worm disease symptoms and prevention and rewards available for reporting suspected cases. The song was so effective that South Sudan's Ministry of Health created a position for her within the Guinea Worm Eradication Program, titled social mobilizer. Lotubai now travels to different parts of the country to train other volunteers to become social mobilizers.

For more, please visit: <https://www.cartercenter.org/news/multimedia/index.html>

### **Reaching the Last Mile (RLM)**

Reaching the Last Mile (RLM) is a portfolio of global health programs working towards disease elimination that is driven by the personal commitment of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. The Initiative provides treatment and preventative care in communities that lack access to quality health services, with a specific focus on reaching the last mile of disease elimination. RLM's mission represents His Highness's dedication to ending preventable diseases that affect the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities and helping millions of children and adults live healthy, dignified lives. <https://www.reachingthelastmile.com>, @RLMGlobalHealth

### **Guinea Worm Disease**

- Guinea worm disease is a particularly devastating neglected tropical disease (NTD) that incapacitates people for extended periods of time, making them unable to care for themselves, work, grow food for their families, or attend school.
- The disease is contracted by drinking contaminated water. Symptoms often don't show until about a year when a burning sensation develops. At this stage, the worm, which can grow up to 1 meter in length, is starting to come out through the skin, typically the foot. The worms must be reeled out of the skin carefully over days or even weeks as breaking the worm may result in a leak of larvae into the skin tissue.
- When The Carter Center began leading the international campaign to eradicate Guinea worm disease in 1986, there were an estimated 3.5 million cases in at least 21 countries in Africa and Asia. Today, that number has been reduced by more than 99.99 percent.



- Guinea worm disease could become the second human disease in history, after smallpox, to be eradicated. It would be the first parasitic disease to be eradicated and the first disease to be eradicated without the use of a vaccine or medicine.
- In 2021, only 15 cases of Guinea worm disease were reported across 4 remaining countries – Ethiopia, Chad, Mali and South Sudan. This represents the lowest case total in history and a decrease from 27 cases in 2020.

#### **UAE's role in eliminating Guinea worm disease and NTDs**

- The UAE and its leadership have been committed to fighting NTDs for over 30 years. In 1990, the UAE's late founder Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan made a personal commitment to The Carter Center's efforts to eradicate Guinea worm disease. Sheikh Zayed's donation began a decades-long commitment by Abu Dhabi's ruling family to disease elimination. For more information on the beginning of the partnership between the UAE and The Carter Center, please [click here](#).
- In 2020, marking the 30 year anniversary of the partnership between The Carter Center and the leadership of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, donated \$10 million USD to The Carter Center's Guinea Worm Eradication Program, following a \$5 million USD commitment in 2016. Since 2010, His Highness has donated more than \$400 million USD towards efforts to eliminate preventable infectious diseases, including polio, malaria and NTDs.
- In 2017, the Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Abu Dhabi featured recognition of the global health champions that have been critical to the effort to eradicate Guinea worm disease. His Highness honoured President Jimmy Carter with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his leadership and commitment and presented four health workers from endemic countries with the REACH Award for their outstanding courage and dedication to eradication of the disease.
- Expanding on this commitment to ending NTDs, His Highness also launched the Reaching the Last Mile Fund (RLMF) in 2017, with support from several partners including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. RLMF is a ten-year, multi-donor fund working across seven countries in Africa and the Middle East to pave the way for the global elimination of the NTD river blindness by building on past successes, complementing ongoing efforts, and

reducing the disease's global footprint. RLMF also works towards the elimination of lymphatic filariasis in countries where these diseases are co-endemic.

- In support of the RLMF's work, the Reach Campaign was launched in 2020 to raise awareness about NTDs, specifically river blindness and lymphatic filariasis, among the local population, and raise funds for RLMF. With NTDs continuing to face a significant gap in funding from international donor community, the Reach Campaign aims to mobilize new sources of funding by engaging the public and local companies in the UAE.
- The UAE's strategy for disease elimination is to help keep preventable diseases at the top of the political agenda, maintain progress made thus far, raise funding levels, and work closely with global partners and multilateral initiatives to increase impact.

### **Technical Explanation of Elimination**

- Elimination of transmission (also referred to as interruption of transmission) is defined as reduction to zero of the incidence of infection caused by a specific pathogen in a defined geographical area, with minimal risk of reintroduction as a result of deliberate efforts.
- Continued actions to prevent re-establishment of transmission may be required. The process of documenting elimination of transmission is called verification.
- Elimination as a public health problem is a term related to both infection and disease. It is defined by achievement of measurable global targets set by WHO in relation to a specific disease. When reached, continued actions are required to maintain the targets and/or to advance the interruption of transmission. The process of documenting elimination as a public health problem is called validation.
- The first step in elimination of Guinea worm disease in a country is to achieve interrupted transmission through 0 reported cases over 14 consecutive months. The country would then be classified in the 'pre-certification' phase for at least 3 years from the date of the last reported case.
- Eradication is the reduction of the worldwide incidence of a disease to zero so no further control measures are needed.



- For a disease to be eradicated, every country must be certified, even if transmission has never taken place there. After certification, intense surveillance should be maintained until global eradication is declared.

