

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear Members and Supporters of the APPG on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases,

It has been a busy couple of months in the malaria and neglected tropical diseases communities, with the historic Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases – which saw commitments of over US\$4 billion from governments, international organisations, philanthropists, and the private sector – and with the critical Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria just around the corner.

I was delighted that a small delegation of Parliamentarians from the APPMG was able to travel to Rwanda last month to attend the Kigali Summit. While there, the delegation was able to see first-hand the life-saving work of the Global Fund with a visit to a health centre to see bed net distribution to new mothers and to meet with community health workers to learn about the important home-based management of malaria. The delegation also heard how UK funding is helping to treat and educate communities facing the devastating impact of the debilitating NTD, podoconiosis, and contributing to vital research work into the genetics of the disease. I am pleased that those Parliamentarians attending Kigali have been able to speak about their visit in debates in the House of Commons and Lords – including James Sunderland who raised the issue of the UK's commitment to the Global Fund in Prime Minister's Question Time.

Here in the UK, the publication of the UK Government's International Development Strategy has been met with keen interest from the APPMG. I am grateful to those Members who have been questioning the impact of the Strategy on malaria and NTDs through asking questions of Ministers and tabling Written Parliamentary Questions, especially around the shift from multilateral to bilateral funding. I was pleased to see Lord Trees has also been able to keep up the focus on the impact of current reductions to UK foreign aid on malaria and NTDs with a topical debate in the House of Lords.

As a Group, we have been following our workstream priorities – with a focus this quarter on supporting and promoting British-backed science, research, and innovation. In April, Lord Trees and I met with Dr Bernard Pécoul and his team from the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative to learn about their incredible work developing and delivering new, affordable, and patient-friendly treatments for neglected patients around the world. In July, Baroness Hayman and I had a fascinating presentation and discussion with David Reddy and his team at Medicines for Malaria Venture, hearing about their impressive portfolio of anti-malarial R&D and access projects. Ian Byrne and I also visited Innovative Vector Control Consortium and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine this month to highlight the importance of the UK's regional science hubs in developing new tools and evidence-informed policy to help treat and prevent malaria and NTDs. We were able to visit some of LSTM's tropical venomous snakes and insecticide susceptible and resistant mosquito colonies – seeing both the causes of these devastating diseases and also the incredible research work being done to understand them better.

We have also started work to re-establish our close relationships with Parliamentary Groups, forums, and caucuses in other countries, spearheaded by my predecessor Jeremy Lefroy. I was delighted to meet with Parliamentarians, officials, and global health practitioners from Uganda and Kenya who were in London for the UK East Africa Health Summit to discuss progress, priorities, and challenges for tackling malaria and NTDs. I was also invited to say a few words at the recent Kenya UK Health Alliance reception hosted by Lord Crisp in the House of Lords where some of the fantastic research work in Kenya and the UK across global health was being showcased. I was also pleased to see that James Sunderland, Pauline Latham, and Jeremy Lefroy were able to spend time with our Tanzanian colleagues in Kigali.

As we look to the formation of a new Government in the UK, we hope that malaria and NTDs, and science, research, and innovation, will remain global health priorities. As a Group, we will continue to push for an ambitious UK commitment to the Global Fund and will work towards recapturing some of the momentum needed to fight these devastating diseases.

Catherine West

Catherine West

*MP for Hornsey and Wood Green
and Chair of the APPG on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases*



Catherine at a Parliamentary reception with Global Fund campaigners



Catherine with vector biologist Jess Williams at the Liverpool Insect Testing Establishment

VISITS

Rwanda

In June, the APPMG visited Rwanda for the Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases which reaffirmed the promise to end malaria and NTDs. As part of the visit, Pauline Latham MP, James Sunderland MP, Baroness Sugg, and Lord Purvis visited Mareba Health Centre in Bugesera district of Rwanda to understand how UK funding to the Global Fund is helping to reduce cases of malaria in Rwanda through highlighting the role of Rwanda's community system for managing malaria.



Baroness Sugg meeting a mother and her child at Mareba Health Centre and presenting them with a new bed net provided by the Global Fund

The group met with pregnant and new mothers and heard how the use of insecticide-treated nets was driving down repeated cases of malaria in their children. The delegation also heard from some of the doctors and research technicians about the entomology activities at the health centre, with focus on community-based surveillance. They received a presentation on the role of civil society in social and behavioural change communication, with a focus on reaching high-risk groups. In the local community, the group met with Thérèse Twagiramiya, a binome, or voluntary community health worker, who demonstrated her early intervention work through rapid test and treatment.

The delegation also visited Nyamata treatment and isolation centre where severe COVID-19 cases are managed, to highlight the significant role the Global Fund plays in wider health system strengthening, through pandemic preparedness and protecting front-line workers. During the visit, the delegation also had an opportunity to speak with Dr Marjike Wijnroks, Chief of Staff to the Global Fund, about the upcoming Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund and the importance of an ambitious UK pledge. You can read more about the Global Fund's Investment Case [here](#).



Pauline Latham learning about vector surveillance at Mareba Health Centre

Pauline Latham MP and James Sunderland MP also met with representatives from the University of Rwanda, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, and 5S Foundation who are implementing the UK-funded National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) projects on podoconiosis, mycetoma, and scabies in Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The meeting focused on podoconiosis – a non-infectious form of elephantiasis prevalent in subsistence farming communities, who spend their time working barefoot in these irritant soils, where the volcanic soil causes extreme painful swelling of the feet and lower limbs. Years of exposure can cause debilitating disfigurement, affecting a person's ability to work, and can result in them being ostracised from their families and communities. In Rwanda, 80 per cent of all tropical lymphedema is due to podoconiosis. Those most affected are already living below the poverty line, and patients lose 45 per cent of their productive working days to the disease.

The Rwandan government has set out a goal to eliminate podoconiosis by 2024, and the Parliamentarians learnt how UK-funded research is directly contributing to this achievement, providing real health benefits to those affected through research into treatment options, genetics, education, and tackling the associated stigma and discrimination of the disease – all of which are so vital to enabling patients to live healthier, happier, and more productive lives. You can read more about this work [here](#).

Liverpool

As part of our focus on British-backed science, R&D, and innovation, Catherine West MP and Ian Byrne MP visited Liverpool with IVCC (Innovative Vector Control Consortium) and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) to learn about their work on innovation and impact in the fight against malaria and NTDs.



Catherine West and Ian Byrne observing Paul Rowley and Edouard Crittenden extract venom at the Centre for Snakebite Research and Interventions

The APPMG heard about the diverse vector control pipeline that IVCC is developing and delivering which is helping to bring life-saving interventions to market at scale and at pace, saving many thousands of lives, particularly in the most vulnerable groups such as young children. This includes work on long-lasting insecticidal nets, dual active ingredient nets, next generation indoor residual sprays, and a new outdoor biting intervention called Attractive Targeted Sugar Bait. You can read more about this innovative and cost-effective work [here](#). The APPMG also heard about LSTM's work on mass drug administration and implementation programmes for lymphatic filariasis and onchocerciasis, as well as the need for new innovations and curative drugs to help accelerate elimination of these devastating diseases. You can read more about this work [here](#).

The group was also able to visit Liverpool Insect Testing Establishment (LITE) to see the important on-site testing being undertaken on insecticide-resistant colonies, and the herpetarium at the Centre for Snakebite Research and Interventions (CSRI) to learn about their pioneering research into snake venom for tackling the deadly NTD, snakebite envenoming.

The visit highlighted the importance of the UK's regional science hubs in developing new tools and evidence-informed policy to end these devastating diseases. It also highlighted the importance of the Product Development Partnership (PDP) model as a cost-effective way of ensuring the delivery of new products to tackle these diseases. We look forward to visiting more of our exciting regional science hubs over the coming months.

EVENTS

The APPMG has been an active participant in numerous events this quarter, including a number of civil society receptions and meetings in support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Other APPMG events included:

UK East Africa Health Summit roundtable

In April, members of the APPMG met with Parliamentarians, officials, and global health practitioners from Uganda and Kenya who were in London for the UK East Africa Health Summit to discuss progress, priorities, and challenges for tackling malaria and NTDs. Topics discussed included anti-microbial resistance, R&D, vaccine equity, the importance of sustainable funding, and the impact of malaria on children's education and people's livelihoods.

Indigenous Peoples in Brazil meeting

Together with the All Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group and Survival International, in May, the APPMG met with representatives of the Yanomami about challenges facing indigenous peoples in Brazil. As well as the threats of illegal mining, we heard about the impact of changes to the environment, including land use and deforestation, on the transmission of malaria and other tropical diseases, and the need for more indigenous healthcare workers.

House of Lords reception on Neglected Tropical Diseases

In June, the APPMG's Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, co-hosted a reception in the House of Lords with the UK Coalition against Neglected Tropical Diseases to raise the Parliamentary profile of NTDs in the run-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and the Kigali Summit, by sharing successes and impact from UK investment to date. At the reception, we heard from people who had been affected by NTDs including leishmaniasis, leprosy, and Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS), as well as those who are working towards their elimination – including successful research partnerships with the UK and NTD-endemic countries. Baroness Sugg helped to launch FIG (FGS Integration Group) – a new coalition being set up to address FGS, galvanising joint action across the NTD, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV, HPV/cervical cancer, and water, sanitation, and hygiene sectors. You can read more about the work of FIG [here](#).

At the reception, the UK Coalition launched its new investment case for diseases of poverty. This paper examines how tackling NTDs will help the UK deliver on other global health priorities and improve health equity. You can read the report [here](#).



Lord Trees with members of ILEP, an international advisory panel for leprosy, at the House of Lords reception

ARTICLES

In June, Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, co-authored an article in The House Magazine with Dr Bernard Pécoul, Executive Director of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) on the vital role global Britain can play in helping to cure neglected diseases. You can read the article in full [here](#).

Also in June, Vice-Chair, Baroness Sugg, wrote in ConservativeHome following the publication of the International Development Strategy to urge the UK not to step back in the fight against malaria and to continue investment in the Global Fund. You can read the article in full [here](#).

PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY

The APPMG has tried to keep the issue of malaria and NTDs on the Parliamentary agenda throughout this quarter with a series of written Parliamentary questions and oral questions and debates in both the House of Commons and House of Lords.

In April, to coincide with World Malaria Day, our Vice-Chair, Baroness Sugg, asked a question in the House of Lords on the steps the UK Government is taking to tackle malaria globally. Lord Ahmad was the responding Minister and a number of Peers spoke on a range of topics including the Global Fund, CHOGM and the Kigali Summit, malaria vaccines, UK investment in science and innovation, and UK leadership on malaria. You can access the debate in full [here](#).

In May, our Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, spoke in the House of Lords Queen's Speech debate on UK support for control of NTDs, global health inequalities, and the return of the overseas aid budget to 0.7 per cent. You can access the debate in full [here](#).

Also in May, our Vice-Chair, Pauline Latham MP, spoke in the International Development Committee session on the future of UK aid. Pauline questioned the effect of the International Development Strategy on malaria, and called for continued UK investment to help end malaria, including through the Global Fund. You can access the session in full [here](#).

In June, our Vice-Chair, James Sunderland MP, spoke in Prime Minister's Question Time to ask whether the UK will fulfil its full commitment to the Global Fund to help end malaria for good. Responding, Deputy Prime Minister, Dominic Raab MP, noted that the Global Fund is a very powerful, high-performing international organisation. You can access the debate in full [here](#).



James Sunderland raising malaria and the Global Fund at PMQs

In July, the House of Commons held an Estimates Day debate on the International Development Strategy in which our Vice-Chair, Pauline Latham MP, raised the issue of podoconiosis in Rwanda, following the APPMG's meeting in Kigali, and the important work of the Global Fund in tackling malaria. You can access the debate in full [here](#).

Also in July, following CHOGM and the Kigali Summit, our Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, secured a topical debate in the House of Lords on the impact of current reductions to UK foreign aid on malaria and NTDs, in which he asked about the UK's commitment to supporting NTD elimination in light of the UK signing the Kigali Declaration and to supporting malaria control through the upcoming Global Fund Replenishment. A number of Peers spoke in the debate including our Vice-Chair, Baroness Hayman, who spoke about the withdrawal of UK funding from NTD programmes including ASCEND and the RISE leprosy project in Bangladesh, and Lord Purvis who spoke about the vital work of the Global Fund which he saw first-hand during the APPMG's visit to Rwanda. In his response, Lord Ahmad spoke of specific deliverables following Kigali – including the commitment to invest in Product Development Partnerships – and spoke of the importance of the Global Fund as an essential partner in the fight against HIV, TB, and malaria. You can access the debate in full [here](#).

CONTACT DETAILS

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