

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear Members and Supporters of the APPG on Malaria and NTDs,

It has been a busy few months in politics. As a Group, we have tried to keep the focus on malaria and neglected tropical diseases as much as possible and continue to concentrate on our workstream priorities.

Last month saw the crucial Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – which provides 63 per cent of all international financing for malaria programmes. In the run up to the pledging conference, we worked together with the APPGs on HIV and AIDS and Global Tuberculosis to keep this issue on the Parliamentary agenda – with private interventions and letters, public support for the Fund, and contributions within Parliament. In the week of the pledging conference, our Vice-Chair, James Sunderland, wrote a powerful article on the importance of a strong UK pledge, bringing in some of his reflections from the APPG's visit to Rwanda in June. Following the absence of a financial commitment from the UK at the pledging conference, the Chairs of the three APPGs issued a joint statement urging the Government to translate its support for the Fund into a financial pledge, and a number of our Members continue to lay Written Parliamentary Questions. We are grateful to everyone for their commitment to this vital Fund and will continue to do all we can to ensure the UK makes a meaningful pledge as soon as is possible.

Due to the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen and the early recall of Parliament, we had to postpone our upcoming APPG visit to Mozambique. Cross-Party Parliamentary delegation visits to endemic countries are incredibly important to our work – enabling Parliamentary Members to see first-hand the impact of malaria and NTDs, the lived experience for those at risk of and suffering from these devastating diseases, and the important work being done by respective Governments, Partners, and local communities to fight these diseases on the ground, as well as the vital role of research and development in finding new innovative ways to tackle disease and overcome key threats to progress. We are grateful to all those Partners we worked with on preparations and plans for the visit and are very much looking forward to rescheduling as soon as diaries allow.

Since the return of Parliament from the Summer recess, we have continued to prioritise supporting and promoting British-backed science, research, and innovation. In September, I was delighted to be able to visit Keele University and meet with some of the team working on the ECLIPSE programme which aims to empower people with cutaneous leishmaniasis in the most marginalised communities in Brazil, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka. In October, I was delighted to attend a reception hosted by our Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, to celebrate the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's remarkable 125 years of global health impact and the launch of the school's 125 Campaign to grow skills, capacity, and resilience in lower and middle-income countries. Also in October, members of the Drug Discovery Unit at the University of Dundee visited Parliament to present their work on anti-infectives drug discovery, including for malaria, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, and cryptosporidiosis. Our Vice-Chair, James Sunderland, also met with researchers from the 5S Foundation programme who are working in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Rwanda, to end the neglect of three skin conditions, podoconiosis, mycetoma, and scabies, through social science. James had previously met some of these researchers when the APPG visited Rwanda in June, and I'm delighted that he has been able to build on that relationship.

With a new Government taking shape under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, we hope that tackling malaria and neglected tropical diseases will remain global health priorities. As a Group, we will continue to work towards building the momentum needed to fight these devastating diseases.



Catherine West

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



Global Fund

In September, President Biden hosted the pledging conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), raising more than \$14.25 billion to date for the Partnership's work over the next three years. Many countries increased their funding by 30 per cent over the last Replenishment – including the US, Canada, the European Commission, Germany, and Japan – and France also significantly increased their pledge. Expanding its donor base, the Global Fund also welcomed new and returning donors including Ghana, Malawi, and Tanzania. In addition, more than US\$1.23 billion was raised from private donors. A successful Replenishment of \$US18 billion could save 20 million lives, reduce malaria deaths by 62 per cent from 623,000 to 234,000, and eliminate malaria from an additional six countries by 2026.

The UK restated their support for the crucial work of the Global Fund and committed to remain a strong supporter and contributor with a pledge to come in the coming weeks.

In the months leading up to the pledge, our APPG has been working closely with the APPGs on HIV and AIDS and Global Tuberculosis to continue to raise the importance of a bold and ambitious UK pledge. When the UK did not make a pledge at the Replenishment Conference, the Chairs of the three APPGs released a joint Statement urging the Government to translate its support for the Fund into a financial commitment.

As we await the UK pledge, our Group will continue to demonstrate the importance of a Fund that provides 63 per cent of all international financing for malaria programmes and which, in 2021 alone, distributed 133.2 million mosquito nets,

Cross-APPG Statement on a UK pledge to the Global Fund

“ While it is welcome to see the UK Government restate its strong commitment to the Global Fund, this needs to be translated into a bold and ambitious funding commitment for the next three years to stand with our G7 allies and help end HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria for good ”



CATHERINE WEST MP, CHAIR APPG ON MALARIA AND NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES
RT HON DAVID MUNDELL MP, CO-CHAIR APPG ON HIV AND AIDS
VIRENDRA SHARMA MP, CO-CHAIR APPG ON GLOBAL TB



tested 280.1 million suspected cases of malaria, covered 10.1 million structures with indoor residual spraying, and provided 12.5 million pregnant women with preventative treatment for malaria. In total, the Fund has saved 50 million lives across the diseases to date – and continues to demonstrate through its results and impact what a critical organisation it is.

For more information about the work of the Global Fund, you can read the Results Report 2022 [here](#). The Global Fund's Executive Director, Peter Sands, recently wrote an article in The Times on the importance of a UK pledge – you can read the article in full [here](#).

Visits

Keele University

In September, our Chair, Catherine West MP, visited Keele University where she learnt about ECLIPSE – a five-year anthropological healthcare intervention programme which aims to empower people with cutaneous leishmaniasis in the most marginalised communities in Brazil, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka.

Cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) is a neglected tropical disease caused by the parasite (*Leishmania*) which is spread through the bite of a sand fly, leading to skin lesions on exposed parts of the body, which heal slowly and can leave life-long scars and serious disability or stigma. It is estimated that between 600,000 to one million new cases of CL occur worldwide annually, with up to 40 million people suffering from the long-term, stigmatizing residual scarring associated with the disease.

ECLIPSE is a partnership between Keele University (UK), Kent and Medway Medical School (UK), the Federal University of Bahia (Brazil), Mekelle University (Ethiopia), and Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, and is funded through a £4.6 million grant by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and UK Aid. ECLIPSE uses a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to gain in-depth understanding of patients', communities', and healthcare professionals' experiences and views on the effects of CL on the daily lives of those affected, the barriers to seeking healthcare, obtaining accurate and early diagnosis, and receiving effective treatment. The insights gained inform the development of new interventions, including training packages for healthcare professionals and community education campaigns to increase disease awareness, increase early diagnosis and treatment uptake, improve quality of life, and reduce stigma and social isolation.

You can read more about the incredible work of ECLIPSE [here](#).

Events

LSTM's 125 Campaign Launch

In October, our Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, hosted a reception in Parliament to celebrate 125 years of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), and to launch the 125 Campaign to help build resilience, skills, and capacity in lower income countries, breaking the cycle of poor health and poverty, and bridging the gap in health inequalities. Our Chair, Catherine West MP, attended the reception alongside former Chair, Jeremy Lefroy, and Vice-Chair, Baroness Sugg, and in the presence of LSTM's patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.

LSTM's expertise in areas like malaria, sleeping sickness, COVID-19, Ebola, anti-venom therapeutics, and monkeypox has led to the development of many new treatments and disease preventions. The 125 Campaign will enable LSTM to strengthen skill-sharing and collaborations with experts in sub-Saharan and Asian countries that face the burden of neglected and tropical diseases. LSTM's Director, Professor David Laloo, outlined how, through the Campaign, LSTM will create a Global Fellowship Programme to support 25 researchers with funding and mentoring,



Professor Charles Wondji, Professor of Vector Genetics at LSTM and Director of the Centre for Research in Infectious Diseases in Cameroon, at LSTM's 125 Campaign Launch

and a Global Leaders Programme to create senior research leadership positions in Malawi, Kenya, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania. At the reception, Professor Charles Wondji, LSTM Vector Biologist, based in Cameroon, gave a keynote address about his own career journey, from Early Career Researcher at LSTM, to pre-eminent academic at the Centre for Research in Infectious Diseases (CRID) in Cameroon.

You can find out more about the anniversary [here](#).

5S Foundation Early Careers Researchers

In October, our Vice-Chair, James Sunderland MP, met with Early Careers Researchers from the Social Sciences for Severe Stigmatising Skin Conditions (5S) Foundation project – some of whom he had met previously in Rwanda with our Vice-Chair, Pauline Latham MP. They updated James on their projects and discussed routes by which to bring their research findings to the attention of stakeholders within and beyond Parliament.

The 5S Foundation programme is an NIHR-funded £3.5 million collaborative research partnership between Brighton and Sussex Medical School, the Faculty of Geographical and Environmental Sciences at the University of Khartoum, the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) based at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, the University of Rwanda, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). The Foundation's vision is to end the neglect of three skin conditions – podoconiosis, mycetoma, and scabies – through bringing the social sciences to bear on these conditions, all of which are huge public health problems in the three countries in which the 5S Foundation works – Ethiopia, Sudan, and Rwanda.

5S Foundation's research will help to transform the health and wellbeing of people affected by these conditions by identifying interventions informed by social science perspectives at the level of the patient, the community, and national and international policy. You can read more about this incredible work [here](#).

Drug Discovery Unit and Wellcome Centre for Anti-Infectives Research

In October, our Chair, Catherine West MP, together with Vice-Chair, James Sunderland MP, and Member, Derek Thomas MP, met with the Drug Discovery Unit (DDU) and Wellcome Centre for Anti-Infectives Research (WCAIR) at the University of Dundee to learn more about their work on anti-infectives drug discovery, including for malaria, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, and cryptosporidiosis. The mission is to reduce and prevent suffering from serious infectious disease across the world by developing understanding of how to develop new drugs for these diseases and discovering potential new medicines.

Professor Ian Gilbert, Head of the DDU, outlined the barriers to fit-for-purpose drugs for NTDs – including the lack of commercial drivers, lack of funding for developing new medicines, lack of understanding of how to make drugs for new diseases, and lack of effective treatments – and then presented some of the innovative work the Unit and Centre are doing in anti-infectives drug discovery. This includes work on new medicines and understanding disease biology, on collaborative partnerships, and on capacity-building in low-and middle-income countries with a unique, new Drug Discovery Unit being established in Ghana.

To date, the DDU and WCAIR have four candidate drugs in clinical development, 165 scientists, nine licensed assets to BioPharma companies, and over £100 million invested. You can read more about this fantastic work [here](#) and [here](#).



James Sunderland hearing from 5S Foundation researchers about their work to tackle skin conditions in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Rwanda



Catherine, James and Derek meeting with the Drug Discovery Unit at the University of Dundee

Articles

In September, our Vice-Chair, James Sunderland MP, wrote in ConservativeHome on the importance of the Global Fund in the global fight against malaria. Some of his article is below – you can read the article in full [here](#).

“Having seen first-hand the devastating impact of malaria and watched helplessly as others succumbed to it, I am clear that the UK must not renege on its global responsibility. In June, I was privileged to attend the successful Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, where the UK endorsed the Commonwealth’s goal to end the malaria epidemic by 2030.

While in Rwanda, I also visited an antenatal health clinic where mothers spoke passionately about the effects of insecticide-treated nets in keeping their babies alive and allowing families to sleep at night. In 2021 alone, the Global Fund distributed a staggering 133 million insecticide-treated nets to protect vulnerable people from malaria, just one of the many examples of incredible, lifesaving, preventative interventions that are making a real impact.

The Global Fund also works with international partners to provide timely testing and treatment for the two million community health workers who remain critical to fighting malaria. In Rwanda, I met Thérèse Twagiramariya, a volunteer community health worker, who has worked for years to help those in her locality to detect and treat malaria. She is passionate about her work. Her purpose is to keep people alive. For them, it is about life and death.

The Global Fund is effective, cost-efficient, and ensures that all interventions get to

the right people, at and in the appropriate time and way. In countries where the Global Fund invests, malaria deaths have dropped by 26 per cent since it was founded in 2002. Without these interventions, fatalities would have increased by a staggering 84 per cent over the same period. In fact, the Global Fund provides more than half of all international finance for malaria programmes and the need for continuity is clear throughout all affected regions. It is no exaggeration to state that if we take our foot off the pedal now, we risk a widespread resurgence of a disease that we have worked so hard to defeat. Millions more will die.”

Parliamentary Activity

The APPMG has worked to keep the issue of malaria and NTDs on the Parliamentary agenda throughout this quarter.

In October, in the House of Lords, Lord Bruce of Bennachie asked what specific steps the UK is taking towards meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending absolute poverty in the world by 2030. Our Vice-Chair, Lord Trees, contributed to the debate arguing that within the UK’s Official Development Assistance commitment, our support for health should be prioritised given that “disease causes poverty and poverty causes disease in a vicious circle... health underpins all development: social, educational and economic”. You can access the debate in full [here](#).

A number of Parliamentarians have also been laying Written Parliamentary Questions about the Global Fund in particular – including Member, Baroness Ritchie, whose most recent questions can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

CONTACT DETAILS

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