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**News: Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)**

- Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) released its Global report on neglected tropical diseases (NTD) of 2024.

## **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)**

- Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) is a group of **infections that are most common among marginalised communities in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas**. They are caused by a variety of pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasitic worms.
- NTDs are especially **common in tropical areas** where people do not have access to clean water or safe ways to dispose of human waste.
- These diseases **generally receive less funding for research and treatment** than malaises like tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS and malaria.
- Examples of NTDs are: snakebite envenomation, scabies, yaws, trachoma, Leishmaniasis and Chagas disease etc.
- They are **preventable and treatable**. However, these diseases - and their **intricate interrelationships with poverty and ecological systems** - continue to cause devastating health, social and economic consequences.
- There are **20 NTDs that impact over 1.7 billion people worldwide**.

- India carries the largest burden of **at least 11 of these diseases**, with parasitic illnesses like kala-azar and lymphatic filariasis affecting millions of people throughout the country – often the poorest and most vulnerable.

### **Indian Initiatives to Eliminate NTDs**

- The **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF)** was launched in 2018, as part of **intensifying efforts towards the elimination of NTDs**.
- A **WHO-supported regional alliance** established by the governments of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal in 2005 to expedite early diagnosis and treatment of the most vulnerable populations and improve disease surveillance and control of sandfly populations (Kala-azar).
- India has already eliminated several other NTDs, including guinea worm, trachoma, and yaws.

### **London Declaration on NTDs**

- London Declaration on NTDs **was adopted on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 to recognise the global burden of NTDs**.

- Officials from the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, representatives from leading global pharmaceutical companies as well as representatives of several national governments met at London's Royal College of physicians to pledge to end the diseases.