Defeating Meningitis by 2030: a global road map
Strategy Support Group (SSG)
Terms of reference

Functions

WHO has coordinated the development of the world's first road map for the prevention and control of meningitis. This road map is a call to action, a call to defeat meningitis by 2030. With the collective vision “Towards a world free of meningitis”, the road map paves the way to tackle the main causes of acute bacterial meningitis (meningococcus, pneumococcus, *Haemophilus influenzae* and group B streptococcus). The three visionary goals are to (i) eliminate bacterial meningitis epidemics, (ii) reduce cases and deaths from vaccine-preventable bacterial meningitis and (iii) reduce disability and improve quality of life after meningitis due to any cause. In order to achieve these visionary goals, strategic goals, key activities and milestones are set out in five highly interconnected pillars: Prevention and epidemic control, Diagnosis and treatment, Disease surveillance, Support and care for people affected by meningitis, Advocacy and engagement.

This road map was developed with the strong involvement of experts from all regions, ministries of health, public health organizations, civil society organizations, academics, the private sector, donors and other stakeholders, through a multidisciplinary approach. A Technical Taskforce composed of partners, and international experts, historically engaged in long-term meningitis control has played an essential role in the process of developing the road map.

In November 2020 the Seventy-third World Health Assembly at its resumed session endorsed the first ever resolution on meningitis prevention and control, which approves the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030.\(^1,\text{ii}\) The latter is also identified in WHO’s thirteenth general programme of work 2019–2023, as one of the four flagship global strategies to prevent high-threat infectious hazards.

An initial report on progress for implementation of the resolution was submitted to the Executive Board at its 150th session in January 2022 (EB150/13) and Member States warmly welcomed and supported the establishment of a Strategy Support Group to facilitate the implementation of the road map and raise the profile of meningitis on the global health agenda.\(^\text{iii}\) An initial review of the global meningitis situation and an assessment of efforts made in meningitis prevention and control is due to the 76th World Health Assembly (May 2023) through the Executive Board at its 152nd session (January 2023).

The specific responsibility of the Strategy Support Group (SSG) is to support WHO and its partners in the implementation of the WHO *Defeating Meningitis by 2030 Global Road map* globally and regionally.
Membership

The SSG consists of representatives of global and regional level donors, ministries of health and civil society organizations who are highly committed to Defeating Meningitis by 2030. One to two members of the Technical Taskforce will be observers to the SSG on a rotational basis.

Approximately three representatives, three members from ministries of health and three from civil society organizations, will be invited to join the SSG on a rotational basis, based on interest, availability and commitment to prevention and control of meningitis. The following institutions are each invited to nominate one representative to join the SSG: African Union, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF); Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO, United Kingdom), Gavi, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Wellcome Trust. Membership may be further extended to new institutions, as appropriate, taking into account regional relevance.

WHO will regularly review the current SSG membership and assess if rotation on/off is necessary. Membership is for an initial period of three years (2022 inclusive), potentially renewable for another three years.

Meetings and operational procedures

The SSG will participate in planning discussions through meetings, teleconferences and email. WHO briefings to group members will be held from time to time as required.

Operational procedures will be refined at the first meeting to be held in 2022.

Roles and responsibilities of SSG members

Roles and responsibilities of SSG members include to:

1. Provide political and/or financial support for the road map implementation and monitoring;
2. Champion the road map among stakeholders and partners, acting as ambassadors for the road map and contribute to public awareness of the burden of meningitis;
3. Help identify key stakeholders and complementary initiatives where potential synergies could be leveraged at regional and global levels; and
4. Support WHO and the Technical Taskforce in achieving the road map objectives, in line with the resolution and the Mission of the Organization.

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2 The Seventy-third World Health Assembly approved the road map in November 2020. The definitive version of the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030 can be found in the official records of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly (document WHA73/2020/REC/1, Annex 4).