

The END Fund, WHO, and Reaching the Last Mile Unveil Exhibition by Artist Aida Muluneh at the UN for World NTD Day

Leaders united by the power of art for advocacy highlight urgent need for collective action and investments to achieve the end of neglected tropical diseases

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, January 30, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The END Fund, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Reaching the Last Mile (RLM), an initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is pleased to present Reframing Neglect, a photography series creative directed by contemporary artist and activist Aida Muluneh, which highlights the need to end neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) globally. The launch of the exhibit at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City on World NTD Day brings together advocates from across the global health, arts, and sports sectors to demonstrate the power of art for advocacy and inspire collective action to accelerate progress towards the end of NTDs. The exhibit will be formally unveiled with a high-level evening reception moderated by Benny Bonsu, award-winning sports broadcaster and UNESCO Fit for Life and Gender Equality Advocate, and include remarks from the UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Afghan-Danish professional footballer, physician, and UNESCO Champion for Girls' and Women's Education Dr. Nadia Nadim, and leaders from the WHO and the governments of Indonesia and the UAE.

"NTDs are a group of treatable, preventable diseases that needlessly hold back the lives and livelihoods of 1.7 billion people, a disproportionate number of whom are women and girls," said Aida Muluneh, photographer and activist. "Art has the capacity to shift perceptions, complementing more traditional modes of advocacy. My hope is that this collection helps educate and inspire audiences to action for NTD elimination, while also sharing an African perspective through the work of myself and the other photographers featured in the collection."

Reframing Neglect features work from seven photographers, including Muluneh, from six African countries where NTD burdens remain high. Through fine art and documentary photography, the artists promote the cause and effects of NTDs, using art as a tool of shared human emotion, while addressing the ongoing need to spread awareness of NTDs, which still cause severe pain, long-term disability, and death each year.

"On World NTD Day we remind ourselves how critical it is to co-invest alongside our government

partners in support of their vision. Only by centering communities most affected by neglected tropical diseases and building partnerships that support local leadership and strengthen health systems will the NTD 2030 roadmap targets be met. Today we celebrate the 47 countries that have already eliminated at least one NTD, and the steadfast support from our partners in the pharmaceutical industry and program implementation who have helped make this happen. We are deeply encouraged by the leadership of countries like Niger, Senegal, and others that are building on this momentum and offering hope that we can indeed match the scale of the problem presented by NTDs and improve the lives and livelihoods of 1.7 billion people globally," said Dr. Ibrahima Socé Fall, Director of the Department of Control of NTDs, WHO, and Ellen Agler, Chief Executive Officer, the END Fund, in a joint statement.

Sustained investment is critical to meeting global elimination targets. To help address this, the END Fund mobilizes resources to end NTDs and delivers treatments to those in need by growing and engaging a community of activist-philanthropists, managing high-impact strategic investments, and working in collaboration with government, non-governmental organization, pharmaceutical, and academic partners.

To celebrate 10 years of the END Fund's impact, Muluneh was engaged to create a body of work with photographers from Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Sudan. Reframing Neglect includes photography by Meseret Argaw (b. Ethiopia, 1989), Mustafa Saeed (b. Somalia, 1986), Sarah Waiswa (b. Uganda, 1980), John Kalapo (b. Mali, 1983), Omoregie Osakpolor (b. Nigeria, 1990), and Ala Kheir (b. Sudan, 1985). Developed in part with investment from the Reaching the Last Mile Fund, a 10-year, US \$100 million fund launched to eliminate two NTDs in seven countries, the collection seeks to tell the story of NTDs and elevate advocacy for them while challenging Western representations of Africa and bringing dignity and grace to their subjects. This didactic approach provokes audiences and conveys the urgent need for education, attention, and action on NTDs whilst protecting subjects from the burden of educating.

"I wish to thank the World Health Organization, the END Fund, and the Reaching the Last Mile Initiative for organizing this powerful exhibition on the impact of neglected tropical diseases," said HE Mohamed Abushahab, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the UAE to the UN in New York. "NTDs are treatable and preventable, and it is up to all of us, working together as a global community, to harness the tools and expertise to meet this challenge. We look forward to further collaboration with our partners as we continue on the path towards the prevention, mitigation, and end of NTDs worldwide."

The debut of Reframing Neglect at the UN on World NTD Day represents a key convergence of leaders within global health, arts, and sports all unified in their shared drive for the end of NTDs. As part of the exhibition launch, interactive QR codes will accompany the photography, driving attention to the [Thrive Africa](#) team captained by William Troost-Ekong, professional footballer and Captain, Nigerian National Football Team, and co-captained by Bonsu, on the [Game of Our Lives](#) platform, which enables individual users to complete tasks in support of ending NTDs while tracking the real impact had on lives. Dr. Nadim will also use her platform to call on individuals

to join in ending NTDs.

About the Artists

Aïda Muluneh

Born in Addis Ababa in 1974, Muluneh graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. with a degree from the Communication Department with a major in film.

Her photography has been published widely and can be found in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, Hood Museum, The RISD Museum of Art, and the Museum of Biblical Art in the United States. She was the 2007 recipient of the European Union Prize in the Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie in Bamako, Mali, the 2010 winner of the CRAF International Award of Photography in Spilimbergo, Italy, and 2018 CatchLight Fellow in San Francisco, USA. In 2019, she became the first black woman to co-curate the Nobel Peace Prize exhibition and the following year, returned as a commissioned artist for the prize.

Ala Kheir

Sudanese photographer Ala Kheir found his passion for photography whilst studying for a mechanical engineering degree in 2005. Visiting different parts of Khartoum, the city he grew up in, he captures the complexity of the city as well as the socio-economic issues that lie within its walls.

Ala Kheir currently runs TOV (The Other Vision, photography platform), where he continues his efforts for education, networking, and awareness-raising specifically for photographers as well as the general Sudanese public, aiming to advocate for photography to enable social engagement.

Sarah Waiswa

Ugandan-born, Kenyan-based documentary and portrait photographer Sarah Waiswa explores the New African Identity on the continent. Equipped with degrees in sociology and psychology, Sarah takes a photographic approach to exploring social issues throughout Africa leading her to achieve global recognition through winning the Discovery Award, Gerald Kraak Award, and first place in the story and creative categories in the Uganda Press Photo Awards, among others.

Her work has been exhibited around the world, most recently at the Bristol Photo Festival 2021 in collaboration with the Bristol Archives. Her photographs have been published in The Washington Post, Bloomberg, and The New York Times, among other publications, and she has worked with brands such as Christian Dior and Chloe.

Earlier this year she founded African Women in Photography, a non-profit organization dedicated to elevating and celebrating the work of women and non-binary photographers from Africa.

Mustafa Saeed

Based in Hargeisa, Somalia, Mustafa combines a variety of mediums from photography to sound to explore socio-political issues, including war, conflict, and environment. He is a contributor to Everyday Africa and the founder of Fankeenna, a youth-led art platform that houses a studio, gallery, and workspace for local artists.

In 2015 he was chosen for the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP), and his work has been exhibited at Addis Foto Fest (Addis Ababa), Lumières d'Afriques (Paris), and UNSEEN Photo Fair (Amsterdam). His work has also been widely published on news and media platforms, including the BBC.

John Moussa Kalapo

Born in Bamako, Mali in 1983, Kalapo moved from a career in accountancy to photography after enrolling in a photography course at the Photography Training Center of Bamako. With the bursary from the Tierney Fellowship in 2015, he went on to complete a documentary photography course and a creative residency at the prestigious The Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg.

Using narration and photojournalism to tackle daily societal issues, Kalapo has gone on to work with a variety of NGOs including WaterAid, Spana UK, and One Word, among others. His work has led him to win prestigious awards from Getty Images, Photography Fortnight, and the Mali Inter-Biennale Photography Festival, among others.

Meseret Argaw

Born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Meseret aims to bring new perspectives by shining light on culturally relevant stories with her photography.

Her photographs flaunt her creativity and unique approach to capturing photographs centered around identity, history, and dreams. Praised for her strong, intimate, and impactful photographs, Meseret's talent for photography has been recognized and exhibited at the Goethe Institute, Addis Foto Fest, and UPPA, among others.

Omoregie Osakpolor

Living in Lagos, Nigeria, Omoregie Osakpolor uses his photography and art with the ambition to ignite societal change and engage his audience with social justice and culture.

He has been referenced on CNN Africa, BBC, Quartz, and by leading Nigerian blogs and art journals and has shown his works in both solo and group exhibitions in Lagos, Abuja, Benin City, North Carolina, Fotohof, Salzburg, Bournemouth University (Arts By the Sea 2019), UK, and at the 12th Bamako Biennale (2019). His short film, Grey, which was partly inspired by Ed Kashi's Aging in America, won the Fashola Photography Foundation Prize (2019).

About World NTD Day

Originally announced by the Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi at the 2019 Reaching the Last Mile Forum, World NTD Day serves as a catalyst to translate awareness into action, secure increased resources for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), and crucially facilitate political leadership and ownership of NTD programs from affected countries. Since its launch, hundreds of partners have signed up to mark World NTD Day and demand action to #BeatNTDs. It is celebrated annually on January 30, the anniversary of the landmark 2012 London Declaration on NTDs.

About Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

NTDs are a group of parasitic and bacterial infectious diseases that can cause effects such as deformed legs and blindness and can contribute to childhood malnourishment, cognitive impairment, stunted growth, and the inability to attend school. Social isolation and physical ailments make it difficult for people with NTDs to work, creating a cycle of poverty. Over 40 percent of the world's NTD burden is concentrated in Africa, where the END Fund focuses the majority of its work.

About the World Health Organization (WHO)

Dedicated to the well-being of all people and guided by science, the World Health Organization leads and champions global efforts to give everyone, everywhere, an equal chance at a safe and healthy life. Our mission is to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

More at www.who.int.

About 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. More at

www.reachingthelastmile.com.

About the END Fund

The END Fund is a private philanthropic initiative that exists to end the most prevalent neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). The fund efficiently puts private capital to work, advocating for NTD programs that are innovative, integrated, and cost-effective. It facilitates strong partnerships with the private sector, government partners, and local implementing partners to collaboratively support national disease programs. This is done through a proven implementation model that is tailored to meet the needs of individual countries, with the view to fostering healthier communities, protected from the risks of NTDs. Since its founding in 2012, along with partners, the END Fund has distributed over 1 billion treatments across 31 countries, performed over 43,000 blindness and disability-preventing surgeries, and trained nearly 3.5 million health workers to preempt and treat NTDs. More at www.end.org.

Additional Quotes for Use on the Occasion of the Launch of Reframing Neglect at UN Headquarters for World NTD Day

William Troost-Ekong, UK Footballer, Nigerian National Team Captain

"The mission for the Thrive Africa team on GOL is to build a team of social activists who can work together to address the issue of NTDs, empowering Africa to thrive, not just survive. I am incredibly proud of my African heritage. It is always a huge honor to represent Nigeria on the football pitch, now I want to represent Africa off the pitch, and encourage fans to join me in doing this. Africa has produced some of the biggest sports stars in the world in leagues like the English Premier League and NBA. I am proud to play my part in empowering even more Africans to succeed in sport, education, and business by ending NTDs, many of which can be easily and affordably treated."

Benny Bonsu, award-winning sports broadcaster and UNESCO Fit for Life and Gender Equality Advocate

"Like William, I am very proud of my African heritage and delighted to be representing the Thrive Africa team as its co-captain at this evening's event. I have been an NTD Champion since 2020, working with the END Fund to use my profile within the sports world to raise awareness of the issue amongst this audience, with the hope to create meaningful change."

Dr. Nadia Nadim, Afghan-Danish professional footballer, physician, and UNESCO Champion for Girls' and Women's Education

"As a fellow Game of Our Lives Ambassador, I am pleased to join William's Thrive Africa team and attend the opening of the Reframing Neglect exhibition. My own personal mission is to empower women and children across the globe by giving access to better education. I will do anything I can do to act against issues, such as NTDs, which most commonly affect women and children and can stand in the way of this. I am fortunate enough to have a job where people want to listen to me and take on board what I have to say. This was not always the case, and I want to use this voice for good, by highlighting issues like this."

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