DESTINATION: ELIMINATION
Ending Communicable Diseases in the Americas
History shows that when people work together, communicable diseases can be eliminated. Following a global effort, smallpox was eradicated worldwide in 1980, and just 14 years later, polio was eliminated from the Region of the Americas.

Since then, rubella, congenital rubella syndrome, and neonatal tetanus have also been eliminated, and remarkable progress has been made against other diseases and conditions. By late 2019, 14 countries of the Region were free of malaria, six had eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and only one focus\(^1\) of river blindness remained in the Americas.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the commitment of governments, agencies, and individuals from diverse fields and across communities and countries.

By building on and learning from these successes, the Region of Americas has the potential to eliminate many more communicable diseases in our lifetime. The PAHO Elimination Initiative points the way.

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\(^1\) Focus: the principal site of an infection or other disease
The Elimination Initiative provides an integrated framework based on four lines of action.

**Strengthening existing programs and community approaches through continued innovation to better integrate and synergize primary health care services.** This means creating and reinforcing linkages among health provider networks, community services, disease elimination programs, and environmental health initiatives to optimize prevention and treatment while controlling costs.

**Increasing the capacity of health information systems at the national and subnational levels to improve data collection, analysis, and monitoring of progress towards elimination.**

**Stepping up integration of health systems and service delivery**

**Reinforcing strategic health surveillance and information systems**
Monitoring and addressing key interacting factors that impact health, such as poverty, gender equity, access to clean water and safe air, and effective waste management, among other determinants. This includes strengthening community infrastructures to prevent environmental contamination and supporting financial investments that address these determinants and socioeconomic gaps.

Strengthening leadership and accountability by mobilizing participation of key players such as local governments, civil society, faith-based organizations, business, philanthropy, and the academic sector. This includes streamlining the implementation of interventions while sharing the cost of service delivery.

Addressing the environmental and social determinants of health

Strengthening governance, stewardship, and finance

Integration to achieve targets for each disease

Programmatic objectives for each disease
On our way to 2030: Bringing inspiration and innovation to health

The essentials are largely in place throughout the Region of Americas: health promotion campaigns, universal vaccination programs, partnerships, and a “treat all” approach to achieve elimination. The Elimination Initiative seeks to integrate and synergize existing resources, technologies, and strategies at different levels of society in each country.

Individual countries are not expected to address all the targeted diseases. Instead, each country’s efforts should focus on those communicable diseases that have the greatest impact on the health of their local populations.

We don’t need to reinvent the wheel.
A decade of elimination successes
2010-2019

- Rubella: Regional 2015
- Measles: Regional 2015
- Poliomyelitis: Regional 1994
- Trachoma: Mexico 2017
- Neonatal tetanus: Regional 2017
- HIV, mother-to-child transmission and congenital syphilis:
  - Anguilla 2017
  - Antigua and Barbuda 2017
  - Bermuda 2017
  - Cayman Islands 2017
  - Cuba 2015
  - Montserrat 2017
  - St. Kitts and Nevis 2017
- Malaria: Argentina 2019, Paraguay 2018
- Chagas disease: Colombia 2013, Ecuador 2014, Guatemala 2016, Mexico 2015
- Onchocerciasis: Colombia 2013, Ecuador 2014, Guatemala 2016, Mexico 2015
- Foot-and-mouth disease in domesticated bovids:
  - Brazil 2018
  - Ecuador 2015
  - Peru 2018
  - Suriname 2018
- Chagas disease transmission by blood transfusion: Mexico 2015
- Congenital rubella syndrome: Mexico 2015
- Human rabies, dog-mediated: Mexico 2019
- Onchocerciasis: Colombia 2013, Ecuador 2014, Guatemala 2016, Mexico 2015
- Foot-and-mouth disease in domesticated bovids:
  - Brazil 2018
  - Ecuador 2015
  - Peru 2018
  - Suriname 2018
- Chagas disease, vector (whole country):
  - Guatemala 2019
  - Honduras 2018
  - Nicaragua 2018
  - Paraguay 2018
- Foot-and-mouth disease in domesticated bovids:
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My vision for the Americas is of a society free from inequality where everyone, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people, can live healthy, meaningful, productive lives.

We need both continued vigilance and concerted action if we are to protect and sustain the hard-fought gains that we have achieved with communicable diseases. The year 2030 is only a decade away, and the world is watching.

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne
Director of the Pan American Health Organization
Paraguay’s success against malaria

In 2018, decades of dedication paid off when Paraguay was certified by WHO as malaria-free. Paraguay had launched a comprehensive plan in 2011 to strengthen malaria prevention, identification, diagnosis, and treatment.

A key lesson from that initiative was the importance of stopping the reintroduction of the disease from other endemic countries in the Americas.

“Success stories like Paraguay’s show what is possible. If malaria can be eliminated in one country, it can be eliminated in all countries.”

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
WHO Director General
Caribbean countries lead by example: Elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis

Eliminating the transmission of infectious agents from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding has been a top priority for Caribbean countries. A mother with HIV has a 15-45% likelihood of passing the infection to her child if she is not treated. Untreated syphilis during pregnancy can have severe consequences for a baby, including premature birth, low birthweight, and even death. Other sequelae include skeletal malformations and inflammatory manifestations affecting the eyes, ears, and joints.

To prevent these outcomes, countries throughout the Caribbean have adopted evidence-based interventions to reduce the risk of transmission of infections from mothers to their babies to the lowest level possible and are investing in making quality antenatal care available to all. As a result, the HIV transmission rate in the Caribbean as a whole has dropped by nearly half since 2010; in 2018 alone, 1,300 new infections were prevented in children. WHO officially recognized the dual elimination of HIV and syphilis in Cuba in 2015 and in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis in 2017, setting an example for other countries in the Americas and the world.

“The elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis is, of course, a result of a strong political commitment to public health and making the health of mothers, children, and families a regional priority,” said Dr. Timothy Harris, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and lead health spokesman for CARICOM. “This is a success story we intend to improve upon even more in the future.”
Since its inception in 1902, PAHO has been instrumental in major hemispheric and global accomplishments in disease elimination. The PAHO Elimination Initiative seeks to protect these landmark achievements and to build on the momentum and lessons they provide to reach new milestones.

This is an ambitious effort, but the prospects for its success are solid — if public health professionals and allies across our Region continue collaborating while forging new relationships within and beyond the health sector.

Together, we can make history again.
### Candidates for elimination by 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELIMINATION</th>
<th>ELIMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH</th>
<th>MAINTAIN ELIMINATION</th>
<th>ERADICATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Open defecation</td>
<td>Congenital rubella syndrome</td>
<td>Foot-and-mouth disease in domestic bovids</td>
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<td>Cervical cancer</td>
<td>Polluting biomass cooking fuels</td>
<td>Measles</td>
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<td>Chagas disease</td>
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<td>Congenital Chagas</td>
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<td>Congenital syphilis</td>
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<td>Cholera</td>
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<td>Fascioliasis</td>
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<td>Gonorrhea</td>
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<td>Mother-to-child transmission of Hepatitis B</td>
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<td>Hepatitis B &amp; C infection</td>
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<td>Leprosy</td>
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<td>Lymphatic filariasis</td>
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<td>Mother-to-child transmission of HIV</td>
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<td>Onchocerciasis</td>
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<td>Plague</td>
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<td>Rabies (dog-mediated)</td>
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<td>Schistosomiasis</td>
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<td>Soil-transmitted helminthiasis</td>
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<td>Taeniasis/cysticercosis</td>
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<td>Tuberculosis</td>
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The Elimination Initiative uses the current World Health Organization (WHO) definitions of control, elimination, and eradication for specific diseases and conditions.