

# Carter Center receives \$10 million to fight river blindness

June 12 2015, by Kathleen Foody

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Former President Jimmy Carter hopes a \$10 million donation to end river blindness in Nigeria where it is most prevalent will help spark a global effort to eliminate the disease.

Billionaire philanthropist Emeka Offor of Nigeria announced the donation to the Carter Center during an event there on Friday. Center officials said the donation is the largest from an individual African donor in its history.

Nigeria has set a 2020 goal to eliminate the disease that causes a rash or [skin discoloration](#) and eye disease that can lead to blindness. The larvae that cause the disease are transmitted by biting black flies.

Carter told reporters that the World Health Organization determines which diseases are targeted for eradication.

"If we can prove this with Sir Emeka's help in Nigeria, with 40 percent of the world's problems, then I don't think there's much doubt we can get WHO to say 'OK, let's do it for the whole world,'" Carter said.

Carter says Offor's support will help gain influence with the Nigerian government.

Offor, who leads an oil and gas conglomerate, said he will do everything possible to engage government and fellow corporate officials on the issue. He called Friday's announcement "a high point" in his life and said

the donation and others he has made toward combatting polio is a way to give back to his country.

The human rights organization Carter founded after leaving the White House has worked in Nigeria since 1988 and plans to focus on eliminating the disease in seven states. Center officials said they will work with the Nigerian Ministry of Health to distribute a drug that fights the [disease](#) more often and in more locations.

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