In São Tomé and Príncipe, the annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 2,940 with zero deaths.
Malaria

Sustaining Essential Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting an incredible strain on health systems across Africa. Health systems are required to maintain routine health services for other illnesses even as they handle the additional burden. In order to prevent widespread morbidity and mortality, it is of vital importance that we work to sustain the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during this difficult time including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent health including malaria.

WHO underlines the critical importance of sustaining efforts to prevent, detect and treat malaria during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is of vital importance to ensure the continuity of malaria prevention and treatment services including distribution of insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying, as well as chemoprevention for pregnant women (intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy). Any intervention must consider the importance of both lowering malaria-related mortality and ensuring the safety of communities and health workers given the ease of transmission of COVID-19.

For Sao Tome and Príncipe, it will be of vital importance that the indoor residual spraying (IRS) campaign goes ahead and that the insecticides for the campaign are ordered on time, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the recent guidance and recommendations from WHO. Without this IRS, coupled with the need to sustain essential health services including malaria case management, there will be an increase in malaria cases and deaths.

The Global Fund

The Global Fund has announced that São Tomé and Príncipe will receive €11.7 million for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and health systems strengthening as the country allocation for 2021-2023. The Global Fund has determined the total allocation amount based on São Tomé and Príncipe’s disease burden and income level, as well as several other factors. The malaria component is also allocated a specific proportion of the total, according to a formula developed by the Global Fund that takes into account several factors, including disease burden and previous disbursements. For São Tomé and Príncipe this is calculated at €10 million. The allocations to the individual disease components are not fixed, and can be adjusted according to decisions made at country level. São Tomé and Príncipe is urged to ensure that resources are allocated to malaria control from the overall Global Fund country allocation, as well as from domestic resources, to accelerate progress.

Progress

São Tomé and Príncipe secured sufficient resources to finance the ACTs, and LLINs/IRS required for 2020 and has achieved 100% operational coverage of vector control. The country has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO, and has recently completed the insecticide resistance monitoring and management plan. The country has decreased the estimated malaria mortality rate by more than 40% since 2010. São Tomé and Príncipe has significantly enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of a Malaria Elimination Scorecard.
**Impact**
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 2,940 with zero deaths.

**Key Challenges**
- Malaria upsurges observed.
- Sustaining the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child health including malaria.

**Previous Key Recommended Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Comments - key activities/accomplishments since last quarterly report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Investigate and address the reasons for the increase in estimated malaria incidence between 2015 and 2018</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>The country attributes the increase in malaria cases since 2014 to a number of factors including the 70% reduction in GF funding and gaps in key malaria commodities including RDTs and IRS. STP is undertaking steps to address the upsurge including through the establishment of an emergency district task force including all key stakeholders for response, sensitization and community mobilization; resource mobilisation with China and UNICEF to fill the commodity gaps. Additionally, the country is updating the national strategic plan. The increase in resources secured through the Global Fund is expected to further accelerate the efforts to reduce cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address funding</td>
<td>Ensure the GF malaria funding application is submitted by Q2 2020 and ensure that resources are allocated to malaria control at a level that is sufficient to sustain the gains made in recent years</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Deliverable not yet due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The country has responded positively to the recommended action addressing iCCM scale-up.

**New Key Recommended Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that malaria services including case management and vector control are sustained and implemented whilst using COVID-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RMNCAH and NTDs

Progress
São Tomé and Príncipe has achieved high coverage in the tracer RMNCAH interventions DPT3 vaccination coverage, skilled birth attendants and exclusive breastfeeding and postnatal care.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Sao Tomé and Principé is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, and soil transmitted helminths. Preventive Chemotherapy coverage in Sao Tomé is very good for schistosomiasis (98%), soil-transmitted helminths (89%) and for lymphatic filariasis (81%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Sao Tomé in 2018 is 89, which represents a large increase compared with the 2017 index value (0).

Previous Key Recommended Actions

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH¹: Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Investigate and address the reasons for the low coverage of vitamin A</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>The country has increased coverage of vitamin A by more than 9% but coverage is still low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

São Tomé and Príncipe has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended actions addressing the lack of data for ARTs, and continues to track progress as these actions are implemented.

New Key Recommended Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH¹: Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that essential RMNCAH services are sustained and implemented whilst using COVID-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

- Action achieved
- Some progress
- No progress
- Deliverable not yet due

¹ RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO