Malaria is endemic in all parts of Zambia and transmission is seasonal. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 5,195,723 with 1,209 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 and 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 Zambia, it will be of vital importance to ensure that the universal coverage campaign for long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) scheduled for 2020 goes ahead, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the recent guidance and recommendations from WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria. Without the LLIN campaign, planned indoor residual spraying (IRS) and sustained malaria case management, there could be an increase in malaria cases and deaths. Under the worst-case scenario, in which all ITN campaigns are suspended and there is a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimate that there could be a 42% increase in malaria cases, and a 124% increase in malaria deaths in Zambia. This scenario would represent a complete reversal in the substantial progress in malaria mortality reductions seen over the last 2 decades.

Progress

Zambia has secured most of the required financing to fund the ACTs, LLINs and IRS required for 2020, including with significant domestic resource commitments. The country has also distributed sufficient LLINs and carried out sufficient IRS to achieve universal operational coverage of the targeted at risk population. Zambia carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and reported the results to WHO and has completed the national insecticide resistance monitoring and management plan. Zambia has scaled up the implementation of iCCM and achieved 100% operational coverage of LLINs. Zambia has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of the Malaria Control and Elimination Scorecard and with the recent launch of the multisectoral high level End Malaria Council and Malaria fund. Zambia has launched the Malaria Ends with Me campaign.

Impact

The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 5,195,723 with 1,209 deaths.

Key Challenges

- The country has documented mosquito resistance to four insecticide classes.
- There is a need to strengthen cross border collaboration with neighbouring countries.
- The country has significant resource gaps.
- 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>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></td>
<td>The country submitted the GF malaria application in Q2</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td></td>
<td>The country has observed an increase in malaria cases. The country also faced stock outs of ACTs, but with support from partners managed to fast track the delivery of sufficient supplies. Zambia is working to fast track RDT deliveries to also avoid stock outs. The country is also facing delays in delivery of LLINs due to the global slowdown in commodities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Work to address the increase in malaria cases observed in Q1 2020</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zambia has observed an increase in malaria cases. An investigation was carried out to identify which districts have been affected, with district level follow up. Increased rainfall and an expansion of reporting by community health workers could have contributed to the increase though work is ongoing to identify the causes of the upsurges including analysis of intervention coverage. The country is planning the LLIN mass campaign and IRS campaigns later this year, but lacks resources for additional interventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## New Key Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vector Control</td>
<td>Ensure the IRS commodities are procured in time for the 2020 IRS campaigns</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## RMNCAH and NTDs

### Progress

Zambia has achieved high coverage in the tracer RMNCAH interventions of exclusive breastfeeding, vitamin A and DPT3. The country has also increased coverage of ARTs in children. Zambia has enhanced accountability mechanisms with the development of a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Zambia is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and trachoma. Preventive chemotherapy coverage in Zambia is very good for Lymphatic Filariasis (93%) and below...
WHO targets for Soil Transmitted Helminths (51%), trachoma (22%), Schistosomiasis (17%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Zambia in 2018 is 36, which is a decrease compared with the index value of 2017 (56).

### Previous Key Recommended Actions

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NTDs</td>
<td>Work to increase the preventive chemotherapy for soil transmitted helminths, trachoma and for schistosomiasis along with lymphatic filariasis to reach WHO targets</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zambia secured funding for Schistosomiasis MDA from WHO but implementation was delayed due to the COVID-19. The country has updated the guidance for safe MDA during COVID-19 with a pilot carried out in June, with the rest of the campaign planned for completion in quarter 3, including for the other NTDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH(^1): Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that essential RMNCAH services are sustained and implemented whilst using Covid-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic. Address any stock-outs of essential RMNCAH commodities</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>The country has developed and disseminated general guidance on provision of essential public health services during the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure continuation of services including RMNCAH services</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