Malaria is endemic in Ethiopia with differing intensity of transmission, except in the central highlands which are malaria-free. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 1,015,793 with 213 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, Neglected Tropical Diseases and malaria.

For Ethiopia, we commend the Ministry of Health, in the decision to go ahead with the universal coverage campaign for LLINs and IRS, in accordance with the recent guidance and recommendations from WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria. This decision, coupled with sustained malaria case management through the health system will prevent a significant increase in malaria cases and deaths. Under the worst-case scenario, in which all ITN campaigns are suspended and with a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimated that there could have been a 15.7% increase in malaria cases, and a 15% increase in malaria deaths in Ethiopia. This scenario would represent a complete reversal in the substantial progress in malaria mortality reductions seen over the last 2 decades.

It is essential to ensure the continuity of malaria, RMNCAH and NTD services in 2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our continent. This may include the implementation of any necessary catch-up activities and ensuring timely planning to account for potential delays in procurement and delivery. Any intervention must ensure the safety of communities and health workers given the ease of transmission of COVID-19.

Progress
Ethiopia has scaled up iCCM and secured sufficient resources to sustain coverage of LLINs, IRS, ACTs and RDTs in 2020. The country has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO and has recently completed the national insecticide resistance monitoring and management plan. The country has recently launched its Zero Malaria Starts with me campaign. Ethiopia has put in place strong public sector management systems and has achieved a rating of 3.4 for Cluster D CPIA. Ethiopia has decreased the estimated malaria incidence and mortality rates by more than 40% since 2015.

Impact
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 1,015,793 with 213 deaths.

Key Challenges
- Ethiopia has documented insecticide resistance to 4 insecticide classes.
- Sustaining the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child health, malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases.
### 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>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>The country reports that there are adequate stocks of ACTs, but Ethiopia is awaiting a delivery of RDTs, which has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The IRS campaign and the LLIN campaigns have been completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RMNCAH and NTDs

**Progress**
Ethiopia has achieved good coverage of the tracer RMNCAH intervention exclusive breastfeeding and has recently increased coverage of ARTs in the total population. Ethiopia has significantly enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of the Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Scorecard, including with the introduction of community level scorecards.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Ethiopia is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and trachoma. Preventive chemotherapy coverage in Ethiopia is very good for trachoma (77%), onchocerciasis (73%), and soil-transmitted helminth (71%) and is 60% for schistosomiasis. Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Ethiopia in 2019 is 65, which represents a decrease compared with the 2018 index value (75).

### Previous Key Recommended Actions

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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>The MCH directorate is working to maintain routine service delivery of essential RMNCAH interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the development of a mitigation plan which has been shared with the regions to sustain routine immunization. SBC materials have been developed to strengthen communication. Immunisation and vaccine preventable disease surveillance data has been monitored. Immunization logistics shipments have changed from sea shipment to air flights in order to ensure regular supplies. The FMOH has vaccinated over 14 million children from 9 months to 59 months for measles with 96% coverage with strict prevention for COVID-19. A labour and delivery algorithm has been developed and a non-COVID-19 implementation guide has been developed for sustaining essential services. A self-care technical document was developed for PMTCT. Virtual meetings have been conducted to mitigate the restriction of face to face meeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO
Ethiopia has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended actions addressing low coverage of postnatal care and skilled birth attendants and there have been recent increases in coverage resulting from these actions taken.

### New Key Recommended Action

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NTDs</td>
<td>Ensure that NTD interventions including Mass Drug Administration, vector control and Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention are sustained and implemented whilst using Covid-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic. This includes prioritising key necessary catch up activities</td>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

- Green: Action achieved
- Yellow: Some progress
- Red: No progress
- Gray: Deliverable not yet due