Malaria is endemic throughout Benin. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 3,654,790 with 2,589 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 Benin, it was of vital importance that the universal coverage campaign for long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) went ahead as scheduled in 2020, and the country is congratulated for this achievement. Under the worst-case scenario, in which the LLIN campaign was suspended and with a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimated that this would result in a 33.4% increase in malaria cases, and a 98.3% increase in malaria deaths in Benin. This scenario would represent a 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

Benin has distributed sufficient LLINs to achieve universal operational coverage of the targeted at-risk population. The country successfully raised resources for most of the financing of the required number of ACTs, RDTs and LLINs in 2021 and has good stocks of essential malaria commodities. Benin has scaled up implementation of iCCM. The country has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO. Benin has achieved a high rating in terms of public sector management systems (CPIA cluster D).

In line with the legacy agenda of the ALMA chair, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, Benin has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of the Malaria Scorecard, but this is not yet shared on the ALMA Scorecard Knowledge Hub.

Impact

The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 3,654,790 with 2,589 deaths.

Key Challenges

- Insecticide resistance threatens vector control effectiveness.
- 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.
<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 completed the LLIN campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic through a door to door campaign. High coverage was achieved. Case management has been continued, with the country designing an algorithm for the treatment of malaria during the pandemic. The SMC campaigns were implemented, with four rounds completed by the end of Q4 2020. The country has ordered sufficient ACTs and RDTs for 2021.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Investigate and address the reasons for the increase in estimated malaria incidence between 2015 and 2019, which means that the country is not on track to achieve the 2020 target of a 40% reduction in malaria incidence</td>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>The country reports that one of the reasons for the increase in cases is the increased demand for malaria services, increased population and higher rates of reporting. Benin has also observed increasing temperatures, changes in rainfall and flooding with 23 communes subject to flooding, and at risk of an upsurge in malaria. In response, the country completed the universal coverage campaign in 2020, and has also scaled up SMC and integrated community case management of malaria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RMNCAH

#### Progress

Benin has made good progress on tracer RMNCAH interventions, in particular skilled birth attendants, vitamin A and postnatal care coverage, and has recently increased coverage of ARTs in both children and in the total population.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Benin is measured by using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and trachoma. Preventive chemotherapy coverage for trachoma in Benin is zero (0%), low 58% for schistosomiasis, 85% for lymphatic filariasis (85%), 75% for onchocerciasis and 79% for schistosomiasis. Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Benin in 2019 is 20 and shows a big decrease compared to 2018 index value (60).
## Previous Key Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
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<th>Progress</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH¹: Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Address the falling coverage of vitamin A</td>
<td>Q1 2021</td>
<td>Progress not reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH¹: 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>Progress not reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| NTDs                              | Implement preventive chemotherapy for trachoma including by allocating additional resources for Mass Drug Administration (MDA) and enhanced social mobilisation. Ensure that NTD interventions including MDA, 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 | Q4 2021                        | In 2020, whilst respecting COVID-19 preventive measures, the country managed to organize MDA for Lymphatic Filariasis, for onchocerciasis and to conduct some Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention interventions. Hydrocele and trichiasis surgeries are being conducted using COVID-19 sensitive guidelines |}

### Key

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

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¹ RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO