The annual reported number of confirmed malaria cases in 2019 was 352 with 14 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 of COVID-19. 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.

WHO underlines the critical importance of sustaining efforts to prevent, detect and treat malaria during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is essential to ensure the continuity of malaria prevention and treatment services including distribution of insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying.

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
Botswana successfully mobilised sufficient financing for IRS, malaria diagnosis and treatment in 2021. The country has finalised the insecticide resistance management and monitoring plan. Botswana has adequate stocks of ACTs and RDTs and planning for the IRS campaign in Q4 2021 is underway. WHO has identified Botswana as being a country with the potential to eliminate local transmission of malaria by 2025.

In line with the legacy agenda of the ALMA chair, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, Botswana has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of the Malaria Elimination Scorecard and this is shared publicly in-country, but not yet posted to the ALMA Scorecard Knowledge Hub.

Impact
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 352 with 14 deaths.

Key Challenges
- Malaria outbreaks were reported during previous malaria seasons.
- Achieving and maintaining IRS coverage above 80%.
- Need to further strengthen cross border collaboration with neighbouring countries.
- Sustaining the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child health, malaria and NTDs.
Botswana has responded positively to the recommended action addressing the lack of data on iCCM and continues to strengthen access to treatment of malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea.

New Key Recommended Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<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 2021 IRS campaigns</td>
<td>Q3 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RMNCAH and NTDs

Progress

Botswana has achieved good coverage in tracer RMNCAH interventions, including deliveries by skilled birth attendants, DPT3, vitamin A and ART coverage in the total population. The country has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Botswana is illustrated using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for schistosomiasis and soil transmitted helminths. Preventive chemotherapy coverage data for both schistosomiasis and for soil transmitted helminths in Botswana in 2019 were not submitted to WHO.

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>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>
<td>No progress reported</td>
<td>The country reports that MDA was organised in 2018, 2019 and in 2020 and submitted all MDA reports to WHO in Q2 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTDs</td>
<td>As a priority, submit to WHO the data on Preventive Chemotherapy (PC) coverage of Schistosomiasis and Soil Transmitted Helminths</td>
<td>Q1 2021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The country has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended actions addressing low coverage of exclusive breastfeeding and ARTs in children, and the lack of data for postnatal care and continues to track progress as these actions are implemented.

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