The entire population of Liberia is at high risk for malaria. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 1,232,493 with 601 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 Liberia, it will be of vital importance to ensure that the planning for the universal coverage campaign for long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) scheduled for 2021 goes ahead, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the guidance and recommendations from WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria. It is of particular note that this guidance was developed based upon the experiences of distributing LLINs in Liberia during the Ebola outbreak, and we thank you sincerely for the leadership of the Ministry of Health for this important action. Without this campaign, coupled with the need to also sustain essential health services including malaria case management, there will be an increase in malaria cases and deaths. Under the worst-case scenario, in which there is a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimate that there could be a 7.5% increase in malaria cases, and a 104.1% increase in malaria deaths in Liberia. 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

Liberia secured the resources required for the procurement and distribution of the antimalarial commodities in 2021 and has procured sufficient LLINs to achieve universal operational coverage of the targeted at risk population. The LLIN campaign was recently completed. Liberia has adequate stocks of ACTs and RDTs. The country has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO.

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

Impact

The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 1,232,493 with 601 deaths.

Key Challenges

- The increase in malaria incidence and mortality rates estimated by WHO between 2015 and 2019.
- 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.
### Impact
Ensure that malaria services including case management and vector control are sustained and implemented whilst using COVID-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic

**Suggested completion timeframe:** Q4 2020

**Progress:**

**Comments - key activities/accomplishments since last quarterly report:**
The country reports a reduction in malaria cases in 2020 compared to 2019, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Malaria cases showed a significant reduction in all age groups that coincided with the state of emergency and national lockdown occurring from March to July 2021. 50% of malaria cases have been treated at community level by community health workers during the pandemic. The LLIN campaign was completed, although there were some delays. The country has sufficient stocks of all malaria commodities.

### RMNCAH and NTDs

#### Progress
Liberia has achieved good coverage in the tracer RMNCAH indicator of exclusive breastfeeding, postnatal care and vitamin A coverage. Liberia has significantly enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development and launch of the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Liberia is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, and soil transmitted helminths. Preventive chemotherapy coverage in Liberia is high for schistosomiasis (93%), for soil transmitted helminths (89%) for lymphatic filariasis (84%) and for onchocerciasis (84%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Liberia in 2019 is 87, which represents a substantial increase compared with the 2018 index value (77).

### 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH¹: Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Address the falling coverage of vitamin A</td>
<td>Q1 2021</td>
<td>No progress reported</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Action Item</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RMNCAH</strong>: 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 reached its highest peak of COVID-19 during the month of July, 2021, followed by decreasing cases. Routine health services were not compromised, although there were less RMNCAH activities planned for as indicated below: The Reproductive Health Technical Committee and the Maternal, Newborn Death Surveillance and Response meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom. The Ministry is prioritizing intensified field activities during the Quarter October to December, 2021.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RMNCAH</strong>: Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Address the falling coverage of DPT3</td>
<td>Q2 2021</td>
<td>No progress reported</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NTDs</strong></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>
<td></td>
<td>By respecting COVID-19 preventive measures, Liberia maintained routine case management services such as care for patients, morbidity management and disability prevention, active case identification and search but the case load decreased because patients had fear of COVID-19. The country didn't manage to organize the 2020 MDA as all communities based activities were suspended. The country is working to resume the suspended activities in 2021.</td>
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Liberia has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended action addressing low coverage of ARTs, with recent increases in coverage noted, and continues to track progress as this action is implemented.

**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