In Mauritania, almost 15% of the population is at high risk and 75% is at low risk of malaria. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 135,120.
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 Mauritania, it was of vital importance to ensure that the universal coverage campaign for long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) scheduled for 2020 went ahead, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the guidance and recommendations from WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria. Without this campaign, coupled with the need to also complete the seasonal malaria chemoprevention campaigns and 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 all ITN campaigns are suspended and there is a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimate that there could be a 27.3% increase in malaria cases, and a 79.4% increase in malaria deaths in Mauritania. 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
Mauritania is implementing iCCM at scale. The country has submitted insecticide resistance data to WHO. Mauritania has launched its Zero Malaria Starts with Me campaign.

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

Impact
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2019 was 135,120.

Key Challenges
- The country has a less than 20% malaria case reporting rate by surveillance systems.
- 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 NMCP developed a strategy for implementing the LLIN mass campaign with COVID-19 safety measures to the Ministry of Health’s COVID steering committee, with the campaign completed in December 2020. SMC was not carried out in 2020. The country has experienced low stocks of antimalarial medicines</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**RMNCAH and NTDs**

**Progress**
The country has achieved high coverage of the RMNCAH tracer indicator of vitamin A coverage.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Mauritania is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for schistosomiasis, and trachoma. Preventive chemotherapy coverage in Mauritania is high for trachoma (100%) and low for schistosomiasis (56%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Mauritania in 2019 is 75, which represents a decrease compared with the 2018 index value (88).

**Previous Key Recommended Actions**

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<tr>
<td>RMNCAH</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 MoH continues to ensure the continuity of essential RMNCAH services including antenatal and post-natal care, childhood disease case management and the supply of nutrition supplementation products as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already critical nutritional situation. The country is preparing to introduce new vaccines including HPV and COVID-19 vaccines in the second quarter 2021 and has forecasted and purchased the necessary vaccines for routine EPI. There has been no major reductions in vaccination coverage of children. ICCM has rolled-out in nutrition emergency districts. To avoid RUTF stock out, the country has procured 30,000 cartons of RUTF by March/April</td>
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1 RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO
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<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>
<td></td>
<td>By respecting COVID-19 preventive measures, the country is conducting the NTD interventions as planned. The country has just completed the MDA for Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis in Quinara, Salut and Bijagos and MDA targeting Schistosomiasis and Soil Transmitted Helminths in Quinara, Tombali, Claque, Gabu, Progeama and Farim. Other routine interventions are being conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Address the falling DPT3 coverage</td>
<td>Q3 2022</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliverable not yet due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mauritania has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended action addressing low coverage of ARTs in children under 14 years of age and continues to track progress as this action is implemented.

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