Malaria transmission occurs year-round in Cameroon and is most intense in the south of the country. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 2,974,819 with 4,121 deaths.
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.

In 2021, for Cameroon, it was of vital importance that the delivery of seasonal malaria chemoprevention as well as the completion of the long-lasting insecticidal net (LLIN) universal coverage campaign in the remaining three regions went ahead as planned, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the guidance and recommendations from WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria. The country is congratulated for successfully implementing the SMC in 2021. Without this SMC campaign, coupled with the need to sustain essential health services including malaria case management, there would have been an 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 estimate that there could have been a 13.4% increase in malaria cases, and a 74.6% increase in malaria deaths in Cameroon. This scenario would represent a complete reversal in the substantial progress in malaria mortality reductions seen over the last 2 decades.

WHO estimates that there were an additional 47,000 malaria deaths globally in 2020 due to service disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to an estimated 7.5% increase in deaths.

It is essential to ensure the continuity of malaria, RMNCAH and NTD services in 2022 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.

The country has been affected by the continent-wide restriction of access to COVID-19 vaccines and had only been able to cover 3% of their population by the end of 2021.

Malaria

Progress

Cameroon secured the resources to cover the costs of the LLINs, ACTs and RDTs needed in 2021 and has more than 6 months of ACT commodity stocks, with RDTs currently under procurement to replenish stocks. Cameroon has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO and has completed the insecticide resistance monitoring and management plan. The country is also showing leadership in malaria control through its participation in the High Burden High Impact approach.

In line with the legacy agenda of the ALMA chair, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, Cameroon has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of the Malaria Control Scorecard. The country is also planning the launch of the End Malaria Council and Fund.
Impact
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 2,974,819 with 4,121 deaths.

Key Challenges
- Insecticide resistance.
- Delays in the completion of the universal coverage campaign.
- 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 2022</td>
<td>Malaria control interventions are continuing as planned whilst taking into account COVID-19 guidelines. The country had some funding gaps for the acquisition of PPE for community health workers involved in the SMC campaign but this has been addressed through the Global Fund and the campaign has been implemented as planned. Resource mobilisation is ongoing for malaria. The country has adequate stocks of ACTs for 2021 with RDTs under procurement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RMNCAH and NTDs

Progress
Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Cameroon 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 Cameroon is very low for trachoma (0%) and for lymphatic filariasis (0%). It is low for onchocerciasis (36%) and for soil transmitted helminths (36%) and high for schistosomiasis (99%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Cameroon in 2020 is 4 and this represents substantial decrease compared with the 2019 index value (16)

Previous Key Recommended Actions

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</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. Address any stock-outs of essential RMNCAH commodities</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
<td>No progress reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO
**Objective**

**Action Item**

**Suggested completion timeframe**

**Progress**

**Comments - key activities/accomplishments since last quarterly report**

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<tr>
<td>NTDs</td>
<td>Recognising the negative impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 MDA coverage, ensure that NTD interventions including MDAs, vector control and Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention are sustained and implemented whilst using Covid-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic. This includes conducting stock reconciliation following a national and subnational physical inventory count tracking of leftover stocks at district level and retrieving all expired drugs after MDA for incineration and accountability</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cameroon is conducting NTD control and elimination activities whilst respecting COVID-19 preventive measures. The NTD case detection and treatment in health facilities are being conducted. The country has completed the Onchocerciasis and Soil Transmitted Helminth MDA for 2021 and the Lymphatic Filariasis Transmission assessment surveys. Other routine activities are being conducted as planned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The country has responded positively to previous recommended action on accelerating coverage of ARTs in the total population and in children under 14 years of age, with a 2% increase reported in the last year.

**New Key Recommended Action**

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Address the falling coverage of vitamin A</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

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