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 was of vital importance to ensure that the planning for the universal coverage campaign for long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) scheduled for 2021 went 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, and for successfully implementing the campaign. 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.

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 has been able to cover 19% of their population by the end of 2021.

Malaria

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.

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>✔️</td>
<td>Malaria interventions were implemented as planned. The COVID-19 pandemic caused additional logistical and human resource costs for the LLIN mass campaign with a delay in the arrival of LLINs, and delays in planning, however the campaign was completed. In case management, Digital Health has been introduced to improve service delivery at the Community Level. Quarterly data quality meetings with county health teams geared towards improving data quality are ongoing. The country has enough stocks of ACTs and RDTs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Key Recommended Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Investigate and address the reasons for the increase in estimated malaria incidence and mortality between 2015 and 2020, which means that the country did not achieve the 2020 target of a 40% reduction in malaria incidence</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. In 2020, preventive chemotherapy coverage was 0% for all the four targeted diseases. Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Liberia in 2020 is 0, which represents a very substantial decrease compared with the 2019 index value (87).

### Previous Key Recommended Actions

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<tr>
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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>No progress 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 2022</td>
<td>The country reports that routine RMNCAH activities are ongoing without interruption despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has reviewed key Family Health Division protocols and guidelines including for ANC the Ministry prioritised intensified field activities during Quarter 4 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH1: Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Address the falling coverage of DPT3</td>
<td>Q2 2021</td>
<td>No progress reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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 prioritizing key necessary catch up activities including tracking leftover stocks at subnational level to retrieve all expired drugs after MDA for incineration and accountability purposes</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
<td>Whilst 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 fears of COVID-19. The country didn't manage to organize the 2020 MDA as community based activities were suspended. The country is working to resume the suspended activities</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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1 RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO
Key

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