In Burundi, about 24% of the population is at high risk for malaria and nearly 22% live in malaria-free highland areas. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 4,732,339 with 2,276 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.

WHO underlines the critical importance of sustaining efforts to prevent, detect and treat malaria during the COVID-19 pandemic. For Burundi, it was important to ensure that the indoor residual spraying (IRS) campaign was completed as planned, whilst sustaining case management, and that the 2022 LLIN campaign takes place on schedule. Under the worst-case scenario, WHO estimated that there could have been a 23.2% increase in malaria cases, and a 99.8% increase in malaria deaths in Burundi. This scenario would have represented 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.

Given the difficulties in securing essential health commodities in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is of vital importance that countries sign, ratify and deposit the African Medicines Agency (AMA) instrument with the AUC in order to improve access to quality, safe and efficacious medical products in Africa. The country is encouraged to complete this process.

The country has been affected by the continent-wide restriction of access to COVID-19 vaccines and had only been able to cover 0.09% of their population by April 2022. The country, working with partners, should invest in education and behaviour change communication to increase the uptake of COVID vaccines and therapeutics.

Malaria Progress

Burundi procured sufficient LLINs to achieve universal coverage of the targeted at risk population. The country secured sufficient resources to procure the ACTs required in 2022. The country has carried out drug resistance monitoring since 2018, and insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO. The country has also developed an insecticide resistance monitoring and management plan. The national strategic plan includes activities targeting refugees and IDPs.
In line with the legacy agenda of the ALMA chair, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, Burundi has significantly enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of a Malaria Control Scorecard. This scorecard tool has recently been updated and is being decentralized but has not yet been shared on the ALMA Scorecard Hub. The country RMNCAH scorecard has been shared through the Scorecard Hub.

Impact
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 4,732,339 with 2,276 deaths.

Key Challenges
- The country has experienced a malaria upsurge from 2015.
- Gaps to further scale up IRS.
- 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 control and elimination activities are being conducted in Burundi whilst respecting COVID-19 preventive measure. Plans are ongoing for the LLIN campaign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RMNCAH and NTDs

Progress
Burundi has achieved high coverage of tracer RMNCAH interventions, including DPT3 and vitamin A coverage. Burundi enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Burundi is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and trachoma. In 2020, preventive chemotherapy coverage in Burundi is high for trachoma (100%), schistosomiasis (100%), soil-transmitted helminths (98%) and for onchocerciasis (82%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Burundi in 2020 is 95 and this represents an increase over the 2019 index value (93).
<table>
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<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>Yellow</td>
<td>Burundi is conducting RMNCAH interventions whilst respecting COVID-19 prevention measures. In Q1 2022, the country conducted a mid-term review of the RMNCAH strategy. The country also trained the health workers on Emergency Obstetric Care and conducted the evaluation of Maternal and Child Health projects. In addition, formative supervision using the RMNCAH scorecard were conducted in selected health districts and a high level meeting to officially present the RMNCAH scorecard to the Senior Managers of MoH was organized where the permanent secretary and different heads of departments at MoH attended. The Minister of Health committed to sharing the scorecards on the ALMA Scorecard Hub. Other routine activities are being conducted as planned</td>
</tr>
<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>Yellow</td>
<td>The country is conducting all NTD related activities whilst respecting COVID-19 preventive measures. In Q1 2022, in addition to NTD routine activities, the country is conducting NTD surveillance activities and is preparing the MDA for onchocerciasis to be conducted in 12 targeted districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Burundi has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended actions addressing low coverage of ART coverage in children, with a 2% increase in coverage reported in the last year.

¹ RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO