The entire population of the Democratic Republic of Congo is at high risk of malaria and transmission is intense year round with seasonal variations. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 24,959,997 with 18,636 deaths.
Sustaining Essential Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted routine health services considerably, and the economic impacts continue to hamper health systems recovery. It is vitally important that we focus on recovering lost ground in delivering essential life-saving interventions during this difficult time, sustaining progress towards the SDG targets for Malaria, Neglected Tropical Diseases and Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent health.

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 do this. Early procurement of essential health commodities is also highly recommended whilst long delivery times persist.

The country has been affected by the continent-wide restriction of access to COVID-19 vaccines and had only been able to cover 5% of their population by October 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

The Democratic Republic of Congo procured sufficient LLINs to achieve 100% operational coverage of the targeted at-risk population in 2022. The country has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO. The Democratic Republic of Congo has secured the resources required to sustain coverage of LLINs, ACTs and RDTs in 2022. All ITN campaigns are on track, and there are more than 6 months of stocks of RDTs. The country is also showing leadership in malaria control through its participation in the High Burden High Impact approach. The country has also successfully launched the Zero Malaria Starts with Me campaign.

In line with the priority agenda of the ALMA chair, His Excellency President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, the country has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of a Malaria Control Scorecard. This scorecard is up to date but has not yet been posted on the ALMA Scorecard Hub. The Democratic Republic of Congo plans to announce the creation of the End Malaria Council and Fund.

Impact

The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 24,959,997 with 18,636 deaths.

Key Challenges

- Resource gaps to fully implement the national strategic plan.
- 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>DRC distributed ITNs in 3 provinces as planned. Stocks of ACTs and RDTs at the central level are more than 6 months. The retrospective assessment and MPR are under preparation in collaboration with WHO, GF and partners. Diagnosis and treatment of cases were implemented at health facility level. ITNs were distributed to children under one and pregnant women in EPI and ANC services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Sign, ratify and deposit the AMA instrument at the AUC</td>
<td>Q1 2023</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliverable not yet due</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>Address vector control coverage</td>
<td>Work to accelerate the LLIN campaign</td>
<td>Q4 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RMNCAH and NDTs

Progress

The country has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Democratic Republic of the Congo is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and trachoma. In 2020, Preventive chemotherapy coverage in Democratic Republic of the Congo was very low for trachoma (14%), lymphatic filariasis (9%), Soil transmitted helminths (4%), onchocerciasis (0%) and schistosomiasis (0%). Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2020 is 1, which represents a very substantial decrease compared with the 2019 index value (74).
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH(^1): 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>During the COVID-19 pandemic, DRC recorded supply disruptions in Kinshasa, Haut-Katanga, North Kivu and other provinces with difficult access. The main cause was the closure of international and national borders and closure of local businesses, including pharmaceutical depots, for approximately four months. This impacted a number of programmes. The Expanded Programme of Vaccination was impacted by delayed vaccine delivery, but this is now back to normal with catch-up efforts underway. The National HIV/AIDS Control Programme did not experience any shortage of drugs and inputs for PMTCT. National level stocks are at the right level and strategies have been developed to avoid drug shortages, including providing patients with 3 to 6 months supply</td>
<td></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 2022</td>
<td>The country is conducting key NTD prevention and control interventions whilst respecting COVID-19 preventive measures. Currently the country is conducting the remaining rounds of MDA with Albendazole. Other routine activities are being conducted as planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The country has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended actions addressing accelerating coverage of ARTs in children, with recent increases in coverage observed, and vitamin A and continues to track progress as theses action are implemented.

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

\(^1\) RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO