

# World Malaria Day 2025

## Messaging framework

Theme: Malaria Ends with Us

**Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite**

### Objectives

- **Re-energize** efforts at all levels, from global policy to community action, to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination.
- **Advocate** for increased investment in malaria control and elimination programmes, including through stepped-up domestic financing and successful replenishments for the Global Fund and Gavi in 2025.
- **Promote** innovative strategies and approaches to tackle evolving challenges in malaria.
- **Prioritize** country ownership, actively engage communities, and implement data-driven strategies.

**Suggested hashtags:** #EndMalaria #MalariaEndsWithUs

### Core narrative

- Over the last two decades, investments in malaria responses worldwide have driven substantial reductions in malaria cases and deaths, with an estimated 2.2 billion cases and 12.7 million deaths averted since 2000.
- Despite advances, malaria continues to be a major global health challenge, with nearly 600 000 lives lost in 2023 alone.
- Progress has been hampered by fragile health systems, funding gaps, and rising threats such as drug and insecticide resistance. Many at-risk groups – including young children and pregnant women – continue to miss out on the services they need to prevent, detect and treat malaria.

- But we have the knowledge and tools to change this trajectory. Achieving a malaria-free world will require:
  - » **investing** in proven interventions
  - » **reimagining** our strategies to overcome current obstacles
  - » **reigniting** our collective efforts to accelerate progress towards elimination.
- Ending malaria is not just a health imperative – it is an investment in a healthier, more equitable, safer and more prosperous future for every nation.
- Malaria is preventable and treatable and, by working together, we can ensure that no one is left behind.
- Sustained political commitment, increased financial contributions from malaria-affected countries, and robust international partnerships, including full replenishments of Global Fund and Gavi, are critical to achieving a malaria-free world.

### Message pillars

By focusing on three pillars – **Reinvest, Reimagine, and Reignite** – we can create a set of powerful and compelling messages for World Malaria Day 2025 to inspire action and accelerate progress towards a malaria-free world.

## 1. Reinvest

### Protecting achievements and unlocking new potential

#### Gains achieved to date

- Since 2000, malaria control efforts have helped prevent 2.2 billion cases and 12.7 million deaths worldwide. In 2023 alone, more than 177 million cases and 1 million deaths were averted globally. Most cases (80%) and deaths (94%) averted were in the WHO African Region.<sup>1</sup>
- Many countries with a low burden of malaria continue to move steadily towards the goal of elimination. In 2023, more than half (47) of the 83 malaria-endemic countries worldwide reported fewer than 10 000 cases of the disease.<sup>1</sup>
- To date, WHO has certified 45 countries and 1 territory as malaria-free.<sup>2</sup> These achievements are a reminder that with sufficient political commitment, financing, multisectoral action and community engagement, malaria can be defeated.

<sup>1</sup> Global messaging: World malaria report 2024

<sup>2</sup> Countries that have been certified malaria-free by WHO.

## Issue

- Despite significant progress, malaria remains a major public health challenge, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where an estimated one person dies of the disease every minute.
  - » In 2023, there were an estimated 263 million new malaria cases in 83 countries worldwide, up from 252 million in 2022 and 226 million in 2015.<sup>1</sup>
  - » The global tally of malaria deaths reached 597 000 in 2023 compared to 578 000 in 2015.<sup>1</sup>
- In many areas, challenges posed by extreme weather events, conflict and violence, and other global crises have disrupted malaria control efforts and threaten to reverse achievements in global malaria control.
- A substantial funding gap is further hindering the implementation of effective interventions and the development of new tools. In 2023, total investments in malaria control reached US\$ 4 billion, falling far short of the US\$ 8.3 billion funding target of the WHO *Global technical strategy for malaria 2016-2023*.<sup>1</sup>
- The 2025 U.S. funding cuts are compounding an already critical situation – particularly for national malaria programmes in Africa. By mid-March, countries were reporting major disruptions in the delivery of essential health services for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of many diseases, including malaria.<sup>3</sup>
  - » Mass distribution campaigns of insecticide-treated nets had been severely impacted due to stock-outs, delays in delivery and funding shortfalls.
  - » Indoor insecticide spraying campaigns had been largely suspended.
  - » Stocks of diagnostic tests and medicines had hit critically low levels.
- The successful replenishments of The Global Fund and Gavi in 2025 are critical to financing malaria programmes and interventions, and accelerating progress towards the malaria control and elimination targets set in the WHO global malaria strategy.<sup>4</sup>
- Malaria control and elimination programmes don't just save lives – they're also a smart economic investment for malaria-endemic countries and their international partners.
  - » Cutting malaria cases would drive significant economic growth in malaria-affected countries: a 90% reduction in malaria case incidence by 2030 could boost GDP in endemic countries by US\$ 142.7 billion.<sup>5</sup>

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3 WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing – 17 March 2025

4 Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030, 2021 update

5 The malaria 'dividend' report: why investing in malaria elimination creates returns for all

- » Reducing malaria would also boost global trade, benefiting both endemic and donor countries, with an estimated increase of US\$ 80.7 billion between 2023 and 2030.<sup>5</sup>

### Call to action

- **Increase funding for malaria elimination and control:** governments, donors, and the private sector must step up their financial commitments.
- **Support the full replenishment of the Global Fund and Gavi:** ensure sustained resources for malaria programmes and interventions.
- **Boost domestic financing in endemic countries:** ensure the long-term sustainability of malaria programmes through increased investment in malaria-affected countries.
- **Invest in proven interventions:** prioritize investments in WHO-recommended tools such as insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor residual spraying, chemoprevention, malaria vaccines and artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs).
- **Build strong health systems:** improve access to malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services, especially for people most at risk.

### Key territories

- **The funding gap:** according to the WHO's *World malaria report 2024*, billions of dollars are still needed to get malaria efforts back on track to meet 2030 targets (US\$ 4.3 billion funding gap in 2023).
- **Global Fund replenishment:** the Global Fund provides 65% of international funding for malaria programmes. A fully funded Global Fund is essential to maintain progress and accelerate the fight against malaria.
- **Gavi's role:** Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, supports the introduction and scale-up of malaria vaccines, a game-changing tool in the fight against the disease. Continued support for Gavi is crucial to ensure that these vaccines reach the children who need them most.
- **Impact of investment:** every dollar invested in malaria control generates significant economic returns, contributing to increased productivity, reduced healthcare costs, and improved quality of life.
- **The urgency of action:** failure to increase investment in malaria will result in more cases, more deaths, and a reversal of the progress made over the past two decades.

## 2. Reimagine

### Innovating for impact

#### Issue

- Malaria parasites are developing resistance to antimalarial drugs, threatening the effectiveness of treatment.
- Mosquitoes are becoming resistant to insecticides, reducing the impact of primary vector control interventions.
- Climate change is altering mosquito habitats and transmission patterns, posing new challenges for malaria control.
- Innovative strategies and tools are needed to overcome these and other challenges to accelerate progress towards elimination.

#### Call to action

- **Use data-driven strategies to drive impact:** tailor malaria interventions to local contexts through evidence-based, data-driven strategies.
- **Accelerate innovation:** invest in the research and development of new and more effective antimalarial drugs, diagnostics, insecticides, vaccines and vector control methods.
- **Unlock new funding solutions:** explore and implement innovative financing mechanisms to bridge resource gaps for malaria control.
- **Turn research into action:** foster collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and programme implementers to rapidly translate research findings into real-world impact.

#### Key territories

- **Drug resistance:** resistance to artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) has been detected in several countries in Southeast Asia and is a growing concern in Africa. New drugs and treatment strategies are urgently needed.
  - » To date, four countries in East Africa have confirmed the presence of partial resistance to artemisinin (Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania) and, based on available evidence, such resistance is also suspected in at least four other countries (Ethiopia, Sudan, Namibia, Zambia).<sup>1</sup>

- » WHO's *Strategy to respond to antimalarial drug resistance in Africa* calls for innovative approaches to delay the spread of drug-resistant malaria using currently available drugs.<sup>6</sup>

One such approach is to extend the lifespan of ACT treatment regimens using multiple first-line therapy (MFT).<sup>7</sup> MFT involves using two or more effective ACTs to treat uncomplicated malaria, either concurrently or in rotation.

- **Insecticide resistance:** resistance to pyrethroid insecticides, the most widely used class of insecticides for bed nets and indoor residual spraying, is widespread in many malaria-endemic countries. Resistance to pyrethroids was confirmed in 55 of the 64 countries between 2018 to 2023.<sup>1</sup>

New generation nets, which provide better protection against malaria than pyrethroid-only nets, are becoming more widely available and represent an important tool in global efforts to combat malaria. In 2023, these more effective nets accounted for 78% of the 195 million nets delivered to sub-Saharan Africa, up from 59% in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

- **Malaria vaccines:** by March 2025, malaria vaccines had been rolled out in childhood immunization programmes in 18 African countries. Additional countries are expected to introduce and scale up malaria vaccines throughout 2025.
  - » With wide-scale deployment of these vaccines, tens of thousands of young lives could be saved every year.
  - » Continued investment in new and improved vaccines could yield even greater gains.
- **Climate change:** shifts in temperature, rainfall, and humidity are altering mosquito habitats and transmission patterns. Extreme weather events are making it more difficult to control malaria. Climate-smart interventions are needed to adapt to changing conditions.

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6 Strategy to respond to antimalarial drug resistance in Africa

7 Multiple first-line therapies as part of the response to antimalarial drug resistance

## 3. Reignite

### Renewing our commitment

#### Issue

- Complacency and fatigue can undermine efforts to control and eliminate malaria.
- Political will and community engagement are essential to sustain progress.
- A renewed sense of urgency and commitment is needed to accelerate the fight against malaria.

#### Call to action

- **Join the Big Push to end malaria** – now is the time for the malaria community to unite and turn commitments into action. The Big Push against malaria is a multistakeholder effort to drive progress through six priority actions:
  1. Improve coordination between global, regional, and country partners
  2. Uphold national leadership and accountability while advancing an inclusive, whole-of-society approach
  3. Strengthen data systems and enable data-driven decision-making
  4. Increase the accessibility, acceptability and quality of existing interventions
  5. Develop and prepare for the rapid introduction of new, transformational tools
  6. Increase funding for malaria, building on a new narrative
- The Big Push responds to country-driven initiatives such as the Yaoundé Declaration<sup>8</sup> and the Lusaka Agenda.
- **Step up political and financial commitments** – the RBM Partnership and WHO call for shared responsibility to protect the hard-won gains against malaria – especially in this time of global instability. Malaria-endemic countries must lead with strong political commitment and domestic investment, backed by sustained funding from their global partners.
- **Celebrate success, inspire action** – the malaria community must celebrate its successes and share lessons learned to encourage everyone to take action to end malaria.
- **Strengthen community action** – Equip people with the information and resources they need to prevent, detect, and treat malaria effectively and to hold governments to account.

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<sup>8</sup> Declaration for accelerated malaria mortality reduction in Africa: commitment that “No one shall die from malaria”

## Key territories

- **Big Push against malaria:** joining and supporting the Big Push set of actions is critical to drive elimination.
- **Political commitment:** robust political leadership is needed to prioritize malaria control and ensure that resources are allocated effectively.
- **Country ownership:** national governments must take the lead in malaria control and elimination efforts, setting ambitious targets and allocating sufficient resources.
- **Community engagement:** engaging communities in the design and implementation of malaria programmes is essential to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Partnering with parliamentarians:** engaging with African Parliamentarians can drive accountability and boost an increase in domestic funding for malaria.
- **Global solidarity:** ending malaria is a shared responsibility that requires global solidarity and collaboration.



# Key messages

## All pillars

### Country ownership and community-level engagement will be key.

- More and more countries have been making malaria control and elimination a national priority. Joining the **Big Push against malaria** will be an important step towards elimination.
- The **Yaoundé Declaration**, signed in March 2024 by African Ministers of Health from 11 high burden countries, is also a key step towards alleviating the malaria burden in some of the most impacted countries globally.<sup>8</sup>
  - » Ministers pledged their unwavering commitment to the principle that “no one should die from malaria given the tools and systems available”.
  - » They committed, among other actions, to strengthening national health systems, bolstering domestic resources for the malaria response, enhancing collaborative partnerships and multisectoral action, and ensuring a functional accountability mechanism.
- Parliamentarians in Africa are joining forces with civil society to drive accountability and catalyse an increase in domestic funding for malaria.

### Scaling up WHO-recommended tools will further catalyse progress in the fight against malaria.

- As of March 2025, malaria vaccines were reaching children in 18 countries in Africa, with further introductions and scale-ups expected in 2025 and 2026.<sup>9</sup> Their wider deployment is expected to save tens of thousands of young lives each year. To maximize impact, vaccines should be deployed alongside other WHO-recommended malaria control tools.
- The wider distribution of new generation nets in Africa also promises to lower the disease burden. In 2023, these more effective nets accounted for nearly 80% of the 195 million nets delivered to sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup>
- Steady progress has also been made in rolling out preventive therapies, such as seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC). Between 2012 and 2023, the average number of African children treated per cycle of SMC rose from 170 000 to 53 million in 2023.<sup>1</sup>
- We must close the funding gap to expand access to these and other critical tools for all at risk of malaria.

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9 WHO Q&A on malaria vaccines (RTS,S and R21).

## **Gaps in malaria prevention and care must be bridged through equity-focused action.**

- Various factors (biological, environmental, social, structural, economic) heighten vulnerability to malaria and make it harder for certain groups to access treatment and preventive services.

These groups include, for example, communities living in poverty, children and pregnant women, displaced and marginalized populations, and other hard-to-reach groups.

- To improve malaria responses worldwide and ensure they are reaching those most vulnerable, countries and their development partners should pursue data-driven policies and actions that are gender-responsive, equity-oriented and grounded in human rights principles. Recommended actions include:<sup>1</sup>
  - » **Commit to primary health care (PHC)** as the foundation of strong, equitable and efficient health systems. PHC includes three components: (1) integrated health services to meet people’s health needs throughout their lives; (2) addressing the broader determinants of health through multisectoral policy and action; and (3) empowering individuals, families and communities to take charge of their own health.
  - » **Tackle the root causes of gender-based inequalities** as well as other determinants of malaria. This involves challenging gender norms, power imbalances and discriminatory laws to achieve a “double dividend” of improved malaria outcomes and reduced inequity.
  - » **Embed equity as guiding principle in antimalarial innovation and product discovery.** End users of products – including women and girls, underserved populations and marginalized groups – should be engaged in the design of new tools and the assessment of technologies to ensure they are accessible and effectively meet the needs of those most at risk.
  - » **Invest in better data systems** to improve health outcomes, eliminate barriers to health services, and address inequities. This includes collecting and analyzing disaggregated data to uncover insights on groups at high risk of malaria.

**Investing in health and care work is one of the most important choices a country can make to safeguard human health, ensure inclusive economic development, reduce gender inequalities and protect against crises.**

- Health and care systems drive inclusive economic growth by improving population health and productivity, providing social protection, fostering social cohesion and equity, driving innovation and economic diversification and promoting health security. Further, health and care work create “virtuous cycles” which help tackle inequality.<sup>10</sup>
- The funding gap between the amount invested in malaria control and elimination and the resources needed continues to widen. According to WHO’s *World malaria report 2024*, the funding gap in 2023 stood at US\$ 4.3 billion, placing ambitions for malaria control and elimination by 2030 at risk.
- With their replenishment events expected later this year, support for the Global Fund – which delivers 65% of all international financing for malaria programmes – as well as Gavi, which works to deliver malaria vaccines within communities, must be prioritized.

**Climate change is exacerbating existing health challenges. It is expected to deepen gender inequality, widen disparities and drive displacement through increasingly extreme weather events.**

- Climate change is expected to widen inequities by heightening economic and food insecurity, leading to poorer nutrition and delayed access to care.
- The 2022 flooding in Pakistan is just one example of the devastating effects of an extreme weather event on malaria transmission and burden.

After the floods receded, pools of standing water created ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, leading to a staggering eight-fold increase in malaria cases between 2021 and 2023, from about 500 000 to 4.3 million.<sup>1</sup>

- To ensure malaria responses are sustainable and climate resilient, WHO has proposed a number of actions,<sup>11</sup> including:
  - » **Establish a common voice** and build partnerships that integrate malaria reduction with climate action;
  - » **Decarbonize health systems**; make them more climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable;

<sup>10</sup> Fair share for health and care: gender and the undervaluation of health and care work

<sup>11</sup> Global messaging: World malaria report 2023

- » **Shift the locus of decision making** from global health institutions to country and community actors for action to address risks and opportunities at the climate–health nexus;
- » **Increase knowledge** of the climate change and health nexus;
- » **Improve guidance and tools** for climate and health surveillance, monitoring and evaluation;
- » **Enhance national capacity** in the analysis and use of climate and malaria information, with coordinated training of both climate and health practitioners.

**Transformational, systemic change is needed to positively impact people’s lives and realize human rights.**

- Malaria should not be seen as an issue in isolation.
  - » Ending this disease will strengthen health and socio-economic systems globally.
  - » The reverse is also true: strengthening health and socio-economic systems will establish the platform needed to eliminate malaria.
- Continued collaboration towards global systemic change is essential to achieve a healthier, more sustainable world.