



Partnership
To End Malaria

World Malaria Day 2021

Key messages

Photography by Emmanuel Attramah, PMI Impact Malaria

World Malaria Day, marked each year on 25 April, is an occasion to highlight the global efforts to end malaria and the need for sustained political commitment and continued investment for malaria control and elimination.

This year, the global community will unify and build on the 'Zero Malaria Starts with Me' movement and the recently launched 'Draw the Line Against Malaria' campaign that aims to mobilize young people in Africa and globally to unite efforts to eliminate malaria.

Through its theme of 'Zero Malaria Starts with Me/ Draw the Line Against Malaria', World Malaria Day 2021 seeks to:

- Highlight the successes of countries around the world in the malaria fight, especially those that have reached zero malaria since 2000;
- Inspire a new group of countries that have the potential to eliminate the disease by 2025;
- Demonstrate that zero malaria is within reach for all countries.

Partners are encouraged to use and amplify key messages, calls-to-action and supporting points below.

Key messages:

• ACCELERATING WITH URGENCY:

In the face of COVID-19, we must do more to protect everyone at risk of malaria and the tremendous strides made in fighting malaria. We can't focus on beating COVID-19 at the expense of accelerating progress against malaria, a preventable and treatable disease.

• REALIZING SUCCESS IN ELIMINATION:

Malaria elimination is possible and the investments made in ending malaria are also being used to fight other current and future diseases. Despite the added challenges of COVID-19, malaria elimination remains a viable goal for all countries.

• SECURING GLOBAL HEALTH:

Ending endemic diseases like malaria is the pathway to strengthening fragile health systems and beating pandemics like COVID-19. Further investments in ending malaria reduces the burden on health systems and increases capacity to prevent, detect and respond to pandemics.

• ENGAGING AND HARNESSING THE POWER OF YOUTH:

Today's youth are the generation that can play a key role in ending malaria.



Calls-to-action:

This World Malaria Day, we must protect and accelerate gains against malaria and leverage malaria investments to fight COVID-19 and emerging disease by:



Surging investments in malaria programmes that strengthen health systems and build on established community health systems.



Promoting and facilitating safe and timely treatment of fever and ensuring that health workers are adequately protected and equipped.



Continuing to invest in research & development and scaling up country-driven solutions as well as innovations such as real-time data and next generation nets that will help us stay ahead of the parasite and mosquito. These investments are critical to reach elimination in many settings.



Empowering the next generation to be change agents in their communities, taking actions against malaria and holding leaders accountable for stepped up investment to end malaria, a preventable and treatable disease that steals futures and kills a child every two minutes.

Detailed World Malaria Day 2021 key messages and proof points

ACCELERATING WITH URGENCY: In the face of COVID-19, we must do more to protect everyone at risk of malaria and the tremendous strides made in fighting malaria. We can't focus on beating COVID-19 at the expense of accelerating progress against malaria, a preventable and treatable disease.

- In 2020, fragile health systems faced the dual burden of preventing malaria cases and combatting over 225 million malaria infections as well as managing new COVID infections. As the world continues to respond to COVID-19, it is critical to maintain momentum against malaria to ensure lives are saved and progress is not lost.
 - » Advances in technology have made malaria both preventable and treatable, yet over 400,000 people died from the disease in 2019, two-thirds of them children under the age of five and more than 90 percent of them in Africa.
 - » Even before the pandemic, despite gains in many countries, progress towards eliminating malaria in the highest burden countries had stalled, and in some geographies reversed due to funding plateau and political will focused on other priorities.
- Two decades of investments in malaria have saved 7.6 million lives and prevented 1.5 billion malaria cases. This significantly reduced burdens on health systems worldwide and improved maternal and child health, survival and prosperity.
- The ongoing spread of COVID-19 continues to threaten the malaria response, particularly in the highest malaria burden countries where the rate of progress has slowed in recent years.
 - » In 2020, the World Health Organization warned countries that disruptions to programmes that prevent and treat malaria could lead to a potential doubling of malaria deaths in 2020. Countries, with support from partners, avoided this worst-case scenario thus far, but we must remain vigilant.
 - » A recent report from the Global Fund uncovered significant disruptions to health systems across Africa and Asia in 2020 due to COVID-19, with malaria diagnoses falling by 31%.
 - » Only 45% of health facilities had enough essential PPE items for its health workers, including masks, disinfectant, gloves and hand sanitizer, while only 11% of health facilities had the ability to conduct COVID-19 rapid diagnostic testing.
- Like they did last year, countries, with support from partners, must stay committed to sustaining life-saving preventive malaria programmes that save hundreds of thousands of lives every year and scaling up adaptation programmes to counter the impact of COVID-19.
 - » In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, countries' frontline health workers and governments, with support from partners, heroically mobilized to sustain more than 90% of mosquito net and seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) campaigns in 30 countries.
 - Despite the odds, these countries distributed over 160 million insecticide-treated nets and reached over 20 million children with SMC treatment, helping avoid a worst-case scenario of a doubling of malaria deaths due to COVID-19.
 - More than two-thirds (68%) of health facilities surveyed across Africa and Asia successfully adopted at least one adaptive measure, such as switching to a door-to-door delivery system for mosquito nets and preventative malaria medicines.
- Those with fever in malaria-affected countries may be unable or reluctant to seek care due to fear or stigmatization of COVID-19, which can lead to severe malaria and death and cause additional burden on health systems.
 - More needs to be done to increase treatment seeking for fevers to ensure malaria cases are diagnosed and treated quickly.
 - Countries must proactively encourage people to beat the fear if they have a fever and to go to the nearest health facility to be tested and receive the appropriate treatment.
 - Initial findings from the latest WHO pulse survey suggest about a third of countries are experiencing at least partial disruptions in key malaria services.

- To protect the tremendous gains made in the past two decades, countries and partners must continue prioritizing safe delivery of life-saving malaria interventions and support the prevention of malaria infection, illness and death through preventive and case management services, while maintaining a safe environment for patients, clients and staff.
- Innovations in data and disease surveillance have been crucial in the COVID-19 response and similar innovations are needed to maintain progress against malaria.

REALIZING SUCCESS IN ELIMINATION: Malaria elimination is possible and critical to fighting other current and future diseases that may emerge. Investments in ending malaria also can be used to fight current and future diseases. Despite the added challenges of COVID-19, malaria elimination remains a viable goal for all countries.

- More countries than ever are achieving and approaching elimination.
- Less than a century ago, families everywhere – including across North America and Europe – lived in fear of a mosquito bite.
 - » With 229 million cases and 409,000 deaths in 2019, malaria is a health security crisis that places a huge strain on half the world’s health systems, exposes gaps in basic health services, undermines economies and devastates families and communities.
 - » Other vector-borne diseases continue to threaten communities worldwide.
- Since 2000, strong political commitment and effective interventions have drastically reduced the global burden of malaria. In that time, over 20 countries from every region worldwide reached the target of zero malaria cases, proving that elimination is possible:
 - Sri Lanka, Algeria, Argentina, Paraguay and Uzbekistan were certified malaria-free since 2015.
 - In February 2021, El Salvador became the 1st Central American country to be certified malaria-free
 - Malaysia and China also have registered zero malaria cases for 3 consecutive years
- The European region was declared malaria-free in 2015.
- Over the past two decades, the number of countries that have reduced the burden of malaria to under 10,000 cases has doubled.
 - » Each country must take a unique approach to malaria elimination, and continued, tailored innovations allow for context-specific malaria responses that save thousands of lives.
- More countries than ever are on the cusp of elimination, and the World Health Organization’s E-2025 report is announcing that 25 countries and territories are within reach of zero malaria cases by 2025.
 - » WHO’s South-East Asia region is on track to achieve the target set in 2016 of “a 40% reduction in malaria case incidence by 2020” largely thanks to remarkable year-over-year progress in India and in the Greater Mekong Subregion.
- Since 2010, the Asia Pacific region has made tremendous progress and has a historic opportunity to end this age-old disease. It is essential that we continue to work together, across government agencies, sectors, and across borders, to sustain progress to the 2030 elimination.
 - » Malaria cases in Asia Pacific have almost halved since 2010 and today there are a staggering 89% less deaths from malaria than 10 years ago.
 - » Malaria elimination is projected to save over 400,000 lives and avert 123 million malaria cases, translating to almost \$90 billion in economic benefits in Asia Pacific.
 - » 12 countries have reported zero malaria deaths in 2019 with Afghanistan, Lao PDR and Vietnam reporting zero deaths for the first time in 2019. Vanuatu has had no malaria deaths since 2012.
 - Some regions, such as the Greater Mekong Subregion, have reduced malaria cases by 97% and deaths by 99% since 2000. The Subregion offers a model for regional cooperation, data sharing and lesson learning.
 - India reported the largest reduction (60%) in confirmed malaria cases in 2019 compared to 2017 - one of the few high burden countries globally showing a consistent decline in the malaria burden at a time when global progress against malaria has been plateauing.

- As long as malaria exists, it will be a chronic engine of poverty and inequality, burdening the poorest and most vulnerable communities, and potentially resurging in times of crisis.
 - » Ridding the world of malaria will lead to healthier, more resilient communities that are better able to thrive, prosper and confront new health challenges as they arise.
- To eliminate malaria, community ownership and leadership is crucial. Community voices, including the next generation, and community actions must be celebrated and amplified at local, regional and global level.
- Countries that eliminated malaria benefit from the significant burden reduction on their health systems and strengthened case management and surveillance that improves their ability to respond to other current and new diseases.
- Experts agreed that with continued political leadership, increased public and private funding to expand access to life-saving tools and the development and delivery of transformative tools, we can – and must – end malaria.
- In many settings, new tools will be needed to achieve elimination, especially in the face of emerging insecticide and drug resistance. This makes sustained investment in malaria R&D vital to achieving elimination.



SECURING GLOBAL HEALTH: Ending endemic diseases like malaria is the pathway to beating pandemics like COVID. Further investment and innovation in ending malaria increase capacity to prevent, detect and respond to pandemics.

- Continued prevalence of malaria points towards systemic weaknesses in local health services and undermines global health security.
 - » Malaria hot spots are also blind spots for zoonotic diseases. Malaria fever cases mask outbreaks of other illnesses, particularly in the rural, forested, remote communities where malaria transmission is the hardest to root out.
 - » Strengthened surveillance, real-time data, diagnostics and genetic sequencing are critical for identifying malaria, tracking the spread and addressing changes in the vector.
 - » Malaria cases have also put a huge strain on already fragile health systems.
 - 7 of 10 symptoms overlap between malaria and COVID-19, led by fever. Last year, malaria control efforts prevented ~75 million fevers, and equipped one million Community Health Workers equipped with malaria Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) that diagnosed 267 million fevers. Yet 40% of fever cases still go undiagnosed.
- These blind spots and gaps expose the global community to significant risk, and come at a devastating cost to individuals and families.
- Countries that invested in frontline malaria capacity and interventions – especially Community Health Workers and their capacity to manage outbreaks of febrile illness including diagnostics, and data capabilities – are now leveraging them effectively for COVID-19 response.
 - » In Uganda, the Malaria Consortium trained 33,000 front line healthcare workers to safely identify and manage COVID-19 while continuing to provide effective malaria case management during the outbreak. Frontline workers also are using digital tools to report into disease surveillance systems, while also delivering face masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) in rural communities.
 - » In Rwanda, investments in the Health Information System that tracks malaria fevers and supply chain were used to also track and disseminate results by SMS for COVID-19 tests.
 - » Centralized systems developed for data management, together with highly devolved systems for case investigation for febrile illnesses has aided in containment of both malaria and COVID-19 in Thailand. The country’s one million village health volunteers stepped in to manage COVID-19 while continuing to drive effective malaria control activities during the outbreak.
 - » In Myanmar, with support from the Global Fund and other donors, malaria CSO partners distributed PPE together with COVID-19 preventive materials to the health workers and Integrated community malaria volunteers for their protection.
- Countries, with support from partners, quickly responded to COVID-19 with innovations and a focus on real-time data that are critical for keeping people safe from malaria and COVID-19.
 - » The RBM Partnership led partners and countries in developing a Global Malaria Dashboard, a one-stop shop of real-time data that tracks supply chain, planned campaigns, malaria epidemiology and technical assistance needs.
 - » Countries quickly shifted to ensure that tens of millions of children and others most at-risk were safely reached with life-saving malaria interventions, with door-to-door delivery of insecticide treated nets that followed COVID-19 safety guidelines and used digital tools to track campaigns and delivery of life-saving drugs.
 - » Malaysia adapted its response to maintain prevention activities to sustain zero cases and continue on their path to malaria-free certification. Door-to-door deliveries of nets rather than large group gatherings for distribution were rolled-out to maintain elimination and prevent COVID-19 outbreaks.
 - » The private sector and other partners safely ramped up production of malaria commodities and worked to ensure a secure stock of malaria prevention and treatment supplies.

- Surging investments in ending malaria is the pathway to eradication and a more health-secure future. These investments ensure that innovation remains central to the global malaria response, meeting the needs of each community burdened by the disease.
 - » Current malaria investments:
 - Eliminated malaria in over 20 countries since 2000;
 - Scaled up community health workers who serve as the eyes and ears on the ground for millions of fever-suffering patients that don't reach health clinics;
 - Strengthened lab capacity and surveillance infrastructure that can quickly test and detect the spread of new diseases;
 - Provided the RDTs to test 267 million fevers for malaria in 2019;
 - Helped build more resilient economies that are better prepared to respond to health threats as they arise.
- Increasing investments and commitments to build on the global malaria infrastructure is the quickest, most cost-effective solution to revitalize progress against malaria and address urgent health security challenges of today and in the future.
- We need an immediate surge in malaria investments to ensure no fever goes undiagnosed, untreated and unreported. This will prevent significant increases in malaria deaths and cases and will help prevent, detect and respond to new health security threats.
- New investments are rapidly enabling the Global Fund and US President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) to expand testing capacity and ensure health care workers are adequately protected with PPE.



ENGAGING AND HARNESSING THE POWER OF YOUTH: Today's youth are the generation that can play a key role in ending malaria.

- New research finds that 9 in 10 African youth want to take personal action in the fight against malaria. In addition, despite COVID-19 diverting attention away from malaria, almost two-thirds (61%) believe the disease can be eliminated in their lifetimes.
 - » A new survey released by the [RBM Partnership to End Malaria](#), in collaboration with [Gallup International](#), explores attitudes to malaria among young people aged 18-34 in six countries: Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa.
 - Young people across Africa understand malaria's impact on their lives and futures and are motivated to take action.
 - Even if malaria doesn't kill, it prevents young people from going to school, realizing their full potential and building their futures.
 - Over half of young people in Africa believe policymakers do not prioritize malaria elimination enough.
 - » The data shows that youth are most likely to volunteer their time to support malaria control efforts, for example by distributing mosquito nets (50%), even ahead of simply sharing information about malaria on social media (45%).
 - » A quarter also hope to make a difference by calling on national policymakers (26%) or engaging community leaders (25%) to prioritize malaria.
- A malaria-free world can be achieved within a generation.
 - » Africa has the youngest population in the world. Malaria robs precious time from education, work and life.
 - » A new campaign – Zero Malaria/Draw the Line Against Malaria – is inspiring African youth to drive unstoppable action in the countries hardest hit until they reach zero malaria. The youth-focused, Africa-first global campaign invites the next generation to join the Zero Malaria Starts with Me movement.
 - » African youth are the generation that can draw the line against one of our oldest enemies—malaria.
- One of President Kenyatta's priorities, as chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, is to establish a "Youth Army" to increase participation of youth and harness Africa's demographic dividend in the fight against malaria.
 - » A new Youth Advisory Council is advising ALMA on how to ensure youth participation in advocacy, action, resource mobilization and accountability for malaria at continental, regional and country levels, support National Malaria Youth Armies' activities in promoting existing youth initiatives and mainstreaming malaria and UHC in their existing agenda.
- We can empower the next generation to be change agents in their communities for ending malaria by choosing medical and scientific careers; leading their communities in adopting preventive and protective interventions; innovating and finding new solutions; and, holding leaders accountable for stepped-up action to end malaria.