

African malaria elimination improving, but still short of targets

Access to core malaria-fighting tools has expanded rapidly for the world's most vulnerable populations: children and pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa, says the *World Malaria Report 2016*, released by the World Health Organisation (WHO).



123rf.com

The annual report, which tracks progress and trends in malaria control and elimination across the globe, also shows that acceleration is needed to remain on track to achieve a number of key 2020 malaria targets.

Treatment improves for children and pregnant women

National surveys from 22 sub-Saharan African countries show that approximately half (51%) of children under the age of five with a fever received a malaria diagnostic test in the public sector in 2015 compared to 24% in 2010.

In 36 African countries, the number of pregnant women who receive intermittent preventive treatment has increased five-fold during the past five years. In addition, WHO data reveals that, for the first time, more than half of sub-Saharan Africans (57%) sleep under insecticide treated nets or are protected by indoor residual spraying.

Call for funding

The report, however, reiterates the scale of the challenge remaining to keep malaria elimination on course. Sub-Saharan Africa still carries the highest global malaria burden, with 92% of the 212m new malaria cases and 429,000 deaths worldwide in 2015. The data illustrates the continued need for a coordinated and collaborative pan-African response.

The report calls for more robust funding, noting that governments of malaria endemic countries currently provide 32% of total funding for malaria. African countries are increasingly providing additional resources for malaria by increasing domestic funding and supporting international efforts. African countries, including Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe contributed to the Global Fund's Fifth Replenishment in September 2016.

Still falling short of targets

Despite these efforts and the progress highlighted by this year's report, much of the continent is still off track to reach the goals established by the Global Technical Strategy (GTS) for Malaria 2016-2030 – the technical framework developed by the WHO for all endemic countries as they work towards malaria control and elimination. Greater African leadership in all areas – particularly in the provision of funding – will be essential to achieve these ambitious targets.

"This year's *World Malaria Report* demonstrates the tremendous progress we are making in combating the scourge of malaria on the continent.

"But we have never had a clearer picture of the huge challenges that remain. Africa still carries a disproportionately higher share of the global malaria burden. We know the global battle for malaria elimination will be won on this continent."

Leadership in pan-African collaboration

"The report serves as a reminder that visionary African leadership and pooling of our collective knowledge and resources are of critical importance to bringing about the action and acceleration needed to keep malaria elimination on course," says Joy Phumaphi, executive secretary of the [African Leaders Malaria Alliance \(ALMA\)](#).

The *World Malaria Report* provides key malaria data for the production of the ALMA Scorecard for Accountability & Action and the ALMA 2030 Scorecard Towards Malaria Elimination. Both ALMA scorecards track progress and drive action on malaria elimination throughout Africa. The ALMA scorecard provides a clear picture of African progress, highlighting the need for continued African leadership.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>