



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Zero Malaria starts with me

Ministerial Press statement on the World Malaria Day "Why survive COVID-19 and die of Malaria? – Sleep under a treated mosquito net"

On the 25th day of April, Uganda joins the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) family, the African Union Commission and the rest of the world to commemorate the World Malaria Day. This year, the day is being commemorated amidst the risks and dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic that has had overwhelming effects across the globe.

As we commemorate this day, the Ministry of Health has doubled its efforts to control the rising number of malaria cases across the country. This year, the day is commemorated under the theme "Zero Malaria starts with me" and a slogan "Why survive COVID-19 and die of Malaria? – Sleep under a treated mosquito net".

The year's slogan lies on the background that the COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to put a strain on health services and has disrupted livelihoods in the country. Before the outbreak, the outlook of the Malaria fight was very promising with a progressive record of reduction in prevalence from 42% (2014/15) to 9.2% (2018/19) Malaria Indicator Surveys. The World Health Organization has set targets for Malaria elimination by 2030. The Ministry of Health, in alignment with the global goals, has completed a malaria elimination policy and strategic plan aimed at rapidly reducing malaria burden and gradually step up to the elimination phase.

With the disruption of livelihood and strain on health services brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is danger and risk of loss of the already achieved gains, Malaria resurgence and a possible epidemic which could prove as disastrous as the current COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Government has geared all efforts to continue essential health services alongside the COVID-19 pandemic response in order to save lives which could be lost from these preventive diseases.



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The Ministry of Health has therefore doubled its efforts to ensure that as the population stays safe against COVID-19, they are protected against Malaria. With this, the National Malaria Control Program has rolled out the distribution of insecticide treated mosquito nets in all major markets throughout the country. This is intended to protect all traders who spend nights in the markets as per the Presidential Directive. A total of 5,000 mosquito nets are expected to be given out under this arrangement.

This year's commemoration further focuses on operationalization of the Mass Action Against Malaria (MAAM) which is a renewed effort geared towards sustaining the gains achieved in reducing Malaria mortality through a comprehensive effort focusing on the individual Responsibility and households levels.

As a country, we have continued to make tremendous strides in achieving our vision of a Malaria-free nation through provision of effective Malaria prevention and control interventions that include; Case management where our Facilities even with in this COVID -19 pandemic have adequate stocks of RDTs and Anti malaria medicines to test and manage all people that have Malaria. In some districts through our Village Health Team (VHTs), the Children under five are tested and treated for Malaria at Village level

All communities are encouraged to seek care on onset of symptoms from the nearest health Facility as they observe social Physical distancing at while the Facility.

As we observe world malaria Day, attention must be given to pregnant women as they high risk of both COVID and Malaria; due to their reduced immunity. This is therefore to encourage all pregnant women to attend all ANC visits, sleep under a mosquito net every night and seek care early when unwell. Their Male counterparts are encourage to support them throughout the pregnancy

Under the Integrated Vector Management control strategy, the Government continues to protect Ugandans against mosquito bites by distributing free mosquito nets every three years. Preparations for the next mass net distribution campaign have been finalized. Distribution of the nets will take place after the COVID-19 situation is put under control. Government continues to avail nets to the most at risk groups that include pregnant women through ANC and children under five years of age through Immunization

Larval source management in high Malaria burden areas in the country is currently taking places in selected parts of the country.

Additionally, we continue to conduct Indoor Residue Spraying (IRS) in selected districts in Northern and Eastern Uganda.

As we commemorate this day today, we should remind ourselves that elimination of Malaria is everyone's responsibility. I call upon all Ugandans, male and female, young and old, house hold heads, LC1 chairpersons, parish chiefs, to join efforts in pursuit of a Malaria-Free Uganda.

As we commemorate this day, we should remember that in order to successfully eliminate Malaria, we should observe the following;

1. Use mosquito nets every night to avoid malaria.
2. Some signs and symptoms of Malaria could be mistaken for COVID-19 infection thus needs to check or test for Malaria as well. If you get the signs, seek medical attention with community health workers and health facilities whom we have equipped with personal protective gear to prevent COVID 19 infection to them and healthcare seeking public
3. Continue to wash your hands with soap frequently to avoid the spread of Corona Virus
4. Observe the guideline given by His Excellency the President to avoid the corona virus

Signature of Jane Ruth Aceng

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY
Hon. Dr. Aceng Jane Ruth



World Malaria Day 2020 - Message of WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti

On 25 April 2020, we commemorate World Malaria Day to draw attention to the devastating impact of this disease on families, communities and societies. As the world grapples with COVID-19, this is an opportunity to highlight the importance of maintaining robust health systems and continuing delivery of essential health services in times of crisis. The theme of World Malaria Day 2020, "Zero Malaria Starts with Me" is a grassroots campaign, first launched in Senegal in 2014. It aims to engage everyone from policy-makers to the private sector to communities affected by malaria.

African countries have led a massive effort to control the disease and Algeria was certified malaria free in 2019. However, there were still 213 million cases in the WHO African Region in 2018, accounting for 93% of cases worldwide. Every year over 400 000 people die of malaria, and 94% of these deaths occur in the African Region. Children under five years are the most vulnerable group, accounting for 67% of deaths.

This situation remains alarming and inequitable. Through the Sustainable Development Goals, countries have committed to ending the malaria epidemic by 2030. The E-2020 Malaria Elimination initiative was launched in 2017 and to halt rising cases, mainly in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, WHO's High Burden to High Impact approach was launched in 2018.2 A year ago, pilot testing of the world's first malaria vaccine, RTS/S, started in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi. So far, 275 000 children have received the vaccine.

This action is commendable, but we are falling short on the 2020 milestone of a 40% reduction in cases and deaths. We will need to double our efforts to achieve a 75% reduction by 2025. Greater political commitment, accelerated investment, and more innovation in malaria prevention and control are urgently required.

Together, we must recognize that as long as malaria exists, it threatens the poorest and most vulnerable, and has the potential to resurge in times of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic facing us now.

To build on the gains we have made, I urge countries to allocate resources, to work across sectors, and to strengthen cross-border collaboration to control malaria. With the required financing, strong coordination, dedicated partners and engaged communities, we can achieve a malaria-free Africa. Learn more:

- In a recent statement³ and online Q&A⁴, WHO underlined the importance of sustaining action to prevent, detect and treat malaria. These services should be delivered using best practices⁵ to protect health workers and communities from COVID-19. We will continue to update messaging and information as events unfold.
- Tailoring malaria interventions in the COVID-19 response (9 April 2020): <https://www.who.int/malaria/publications/atoz/tailoring-malaria-interventions-in-the-covid-19-response/en/>
- World Malaria Report 2019 <https://www.who.int/malaria/publications/world-malaria-report-2019/en/>

World Malaria Day
A Zero Malaria Starts With Me

■ Why survive Covid-19 and die of Malaria?
Sleep under a mosquito net every night.

Stay Home, Stay Safe as You
#ChaseMalariaToZero

World Malaria Day
A Zero Malaria Starts With Me

■ Health workers continue to offer malaria services in the lockdown. Seek treatment for malaria when you notice signs.

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