

World Malaria Day 2020: A world free from malaria

Message from WHO Representative to India



In these unprecedented times, when the COVID-19 pandemic is testing the resilience of health systems in countries across the world, sustaining efforts to prevent, detect and treat malaria, and employing best practices to protect health workers and communities is absolutely critical. Recognizing the heavy toll that malaria exacts on vulnerable populations and health systems, WHO has provided guidance for countries to safely maintain [essential health services](#) and urges countries to ensure the continuity of malaria services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 25 April 2020, World Malaria Day, WHO joins partner organizations in promoting **“Zero malaria starts with me,”** campaign to keep malaria high on the health agenda, mobilize additional resources, and empower communities to take ownership of malaria prevention and care.

Malaria is preventable and curable, and increased efforts have helped reduce the malaria burden in many places. According to the WHO [World malaria report 2019](#), there were an estimated 228 million malaria cases in 89 countries. India represents 3% of the global malaria burden. While no significant gains were made in reducing malaria cases during the period 2014 to 2018, the good news as per the report is that the two high burden countries which achieved a significant reduction in malaria cases in 2018, as compared with the previous year, were India and Uganda. India showed a reduction in reported cases of 51% compared with 2017 and of 60% compared with 2016, as per the report.

India is accelerating progress towards the attainment of malaria free status by 2027 and eliminating the disease by 2030. The National Strategic Action Plan for Malaria Elimination in India 2017-2022 focuses on district-based planning, implementation and monitoring.

Further, WHO and the [Roll Back Malaria Partnership](#) have catalyzed the [High burden to high impact](#) (HBHI), a new approach to intensify support for countries with a high burden of malaria and to get back on track for the milestones set out in the Global Technical Strategy (GTS) for Malaria Elimination 2016-2030. In India, WHO has supported the adoption of HBHI approaches in the states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Jharkhand. WHO has collaborated with the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) to undertake situation analysis, capacity building of district malaria officers and finalizing district operational plans for malaria reduction and elimination; as well as enhancing quality assurance of malaria microscope. To strengthen surveillance, WHO has supported the government in the development of the reporting format for malaria under the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP), to enable near real-time reporting and monitoring of data to guide better programme implementation.

Visit WHO campaign page for more information on [World Malaria Day 2020](#)

I would also like to thank our health workers for their dedication and efforts towards malaria reduction in the country. The spirit of this year's malaria day campaign 'Zero Malaria Starts with Me' echoes the fact that is a collective fight. Zero malaria starts with me, with you and with all of us — do join the shared effort for a malaria free world.

Sincerely,

Dr Henk Bekedam,
WHO Representative to India