WORLD MALARIA DAY 2011:
PROGRESS TOWARDS MALARIA ELIMINATION
IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC

Malaria, other Vectorborne and Parasitic Diseases
Western Pacific Regional Office

April 2011
World Malaria Day 2011: Progress towards malaria elimination in the Western Pacific

Epule Village, Shefa Province
Theme: "Achieving Progress and Impact"
Activity: Village Clean Up - 9 April / Community Quiz - 10 April
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgement 5

Message of Dr Shin Young-soo, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific 6

Introduction 8

Key World Malaria Day 2011 Commemorative Events 10

  Regional Events 12

  Country Events 16

Outputs 35

Outcomes 37

Lessons Learned 39

Recommendations and Way Forward 41

Conclusion 43
25 April 2011

Progress towards malaria elimination in the Western Pacific
Acknowledgement

The WHO Regional Office in the Western Pacific appreciates the active involvement of communities in commemorating World Malaria Day 2011, and the commitment of officials of the Ministries / Departments of Health, and directors and staff of malaria programmes from the malaria-endemic Member States. We also put on record our appreciation of the support of all partners and stakeholders in commemorating 2011 World Malaria Day.

Photo credits:
All photos were contributed by staff of the Regional and Country Offices.
This year’s commemoration of World Malaria Day marks the 10th anniversary of a decade-long effort to reduce the burden of malaria in affected Member States. The global theme for this year is “Achieving progress and impact”, and our slogan is “Progress towards malaria elimination in the Western Pacific”. It is a time to reflect on the achievements made, identify solutions to current and potential challenges, and call on stakeholders to sustain and improve on their commitment, be it financial, political or technical.

In 2006, the United Nations Secretary-General called for universal access to malaria prevention and control by the end of 2010, and elimination of malaria deaths by 2015. This was followed in 2007 by World Health Assembly Resolution WHA60.18 which calls for a broad range of national and international actions to scale up malaria control and elimination programmes. The Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in 2009 endorsed the Regional Action Plan for Malaria Control and Elimination in the Western Pacific (2010–2015). The plan serves as the road map for malaria elimination.

Over the last decade, many countries in the Western Pacific Region have been very successful in reducing the burden of malaria. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of confirmed malaria cases in the Region was reduced by 36%, while malaria deaths declined by 56%. Public-sector health facilities reported 255,593 confirmed cases of malaria and a total of 1031 malaria deaths in 2009. However, many cases and deaths still go unrecorded. Some countries still count fever cases rather than confirmed malaria cases.
Ten of the 37 Western Pacific countries and areas are still endemic for malaria. Two of these, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, have put in place nationwide elimination programmes. China, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and most recently, Cambodia and Viet Nam have declared malaria elimination as a national programme goal and are advancing progressively, province-to-province, island-to-island.

Despite the success in the Region, challenges remain. Malaria endemic foci can still be found in many countries, especially Papua New Guinea. Resistance to artemisinin, currently our most important antimalarial medicine, has emerged on the Cambodia-Thailand border and possibly elsewhere and is a serious threat to malaria control and elimination. Vivax malaria may relapse, and more research is needed to improve its treatment. More attention should be devoted to increasing human resources for vector control in many countries. Knowledge of the epidemiology of the disease in different situations is required, including for zoonotic malaria infections which may affect humans. Interventions need to be tailored to various risk groups, vector behaviours, local health infrastructure and environmental conditions.

Malaria elimination in the Western Pacific Region is feasible but will require higher commitment and sustained action by the Member States and partners. Financial resources to fight malaria are increasing in many country programmes, necessitating demand for quality technical support. WHO’s role in maintaining such standards have resource implications. WHO, as the lead ally of government on health issues, will continue to provide the necessary support to Member States on a timely basis. The next decade will be crucial for the Region, as most countries are working towards malaria elimination. Let us all, as partners in progress, honour our pledges and live up to our commitments. Thank you.
Introduction

Background

World Malaria Day (WMD) was established following a resolution of the World Health Assembly in 2007. It is commemorated with activities by the global malaria community to remind world leaders and all key stakeholders of their commitments to reduce the burden of malaria by 2010 and reverse the trend by 2015.

As 2010 was a milestone, the global theme for 2011 was “achieving progress and impact”. For our Region, the slogan was “Progress towards malaria elimination in the Western Pacific”. The day was a time to reflect on achievements, identify feasible solutions to current and potential challenges and call on stakeholders to sustain and improve on their commitment, be it political, technical or financial. The WHO Western Pacific Region joined the rest of the world in this year’s commemoration with a series of activities at regional and country levels.
As part of the preparatory activities, which began in February, notice of the global theme was shared with the Malaria, other Vectorborne and Parasitic Diseases (MVP) units at regional and country levels. This aimed to sensitize the country programmes to start planning for the day’s commemoration. As usual, the Western Pacific Regional Office, MVP and the WMD Planning Committee met to agree on proposed activities, review progress and organize events. The planned activities at the Western Pacific Regional Office level were:

- Inclusion of the malaria progress report in the Regional Director’s message during the opening ceremony of the 100th WHO Representatives /Country Liaison Offices Meeting.
- Regional Director’s message for the day to be published on the Western Pacific Regional Office and RBM websites.
- Updating the Western Pacific Regional Office websites with newer country profiles.
- Poster exhibition: Trend data and illustrations showing progress and impact at the Western Pacific Regional Office and country levels towards malaria elimination.
- Exhibition of malaria control and elimination interventions (e.g., insecticide treated bednets (ITNs), medicines, guidelines, manuals, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and reports).
- Display of a WMD 2011 streamer in front of the Western Pacific Regional Office.
- Distribution of WHO publications and Western Pacific Region-WMD 2011 souvenirs (e.g., bookmark, mosquito expellants).
Key World Malaria Day 2011 Commemorative Events

Students in Papua New Guinea mark World Malaria Day celebration
In World Malaria Day celebration in Viet Nam; security personnel were not left out.
Regional Events

1. Regional Director’s message during the opening ceremony of the 100th WHO Representatives and Country Liaison Offices Meeting:

The Regional Director, before a 300-member audience, including WHO Representatives and Country Liaison Office staff members in the Western Pacific Regional Office and several Country Offices, recognized World Malaria Day:

"Today, 25th April, is also World Malaria Day.

The global theme for this year is “achieving progress and impact” and, for our Region, our slogan is, “Progress Towards Malaria Elimination in the Western Pacific”.

Malaria is one of the target diseases of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6. It has shown very good progress in achieving the 2015 target. Again, our Region has made outstanding progress compared with other regions. I am proud of it.

We have regional action plan 2010-2015 endorsed by the Regional Committee. I recognize Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, China, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and, recently, Cambodia, for targeting malaria elimination with high political commitment.

However, it is too early to celebrate our performance in malaria control. Malaria is still one of the major health problems in Papua New Guinea. We are very concerned about the emergence and spread of artemisinin resistance malaria across international borders.

Today, we call on Member States, partners and stakeholders to continue to honour our pledges and improve upon our commitments in order to achieve set elimination targets. I count on you WRs and CLOs to make this happen”.

– Dr. Shin Young-soo, Regional Director for the Western Pacific
The Regional Director’s message for the day was published on the Western Pacific Regional Office website and linked to the Roll Back Malaria Partnership website.

The message focused on the importance of the day to remind Member States and partners of their commitment to support the fight against malaria until all goals are achieved. Dr Shin highlighted the significant progress recorded in the Region and potential challenges that could impede rapid movement from malaria control to elimination in some countries. The Regional Director said that the next decade will be crucial for the Region, as most countries are working towards malaria elimination. He encouraged everyone, as partners in progress, to honour our pledges and to live up to our commitments.

2. Updating of Western Pacific Regional Office websites with new data about country profiles

Each country’s malaria data on the Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) website (http://www.wpro.who.int/topics/malaria/en) was updated with 2009 malaria morbidity and mortality information as contained in the recently published WHO World Malaria Report 2010. These data were presented in graphical format. Also, a comprehensive country epidemiological profile was updated for some countries. This is a regular exercise to reflect significant malaria events within and around a country.
3. Poster exhibition

Posters showing trend analysis data (during the period 2000-2009) and illustrations showing progress and impact at regional and country levels towards malaria elimination were displayed in the Regional Office lobby. MVP staff were on standby to explain and provide clarifications as necessary.

4. Exhibition of malaria control and elimination interventions

In order to sensitize WHO staff and visitors to the Regional Office about malaria, examples of the tools used against malaria were put on display. These included mosquito nets of different types (re-treatable and long-lasting) and shapes (regular and conical), malaria diagnostic equipment such as microscopes and rapid diagnostic tests and WHO-recommended antimalarial medicines. Also on display were WHO publications such as the *Global Report on Antimalarial Drug Efficacy and Drug Resistance: 2000-2010*, the *Global Plan for Artemisinin Resistance Containment*, the *World Malaria Report 2010* and other relevant documents. Information materials such as malaria newsletters from Cambodia (*Containment of Drug-Resistant Malaria on the Thai-Cambodia Border*) were distributed. These documents on antimalarial resistance and its containment efforts in the Region complemented this year’s World Health Day, marked on 7 April 2011 with the theme, “Combat drug resistance! No action today, no cure tomorrow” to raise awareness about what drives antimicrobial resistance and how to halt it.
5. **Display of WMD 2011 streamer in front of the Western Pacific Regional Office**

A streamer was hung in front of the Western Pacific Regional Office to call public attention to World Malaria Day and to increase awareness about malaria.

6. **Distribution of WHO publications and Western Pacific Region-WMD 2011 souvenirs**

Western Pacific Region-WMD souvenirs such as bookmarks showing the interventions that will help malaria elimination in the Region were distributed. Mosquito repellents for personal protection against vectorborne diseases were also made available.
Country Events

Cambodia

In Cambodia, WMD 2011 was commemorated on 25 April in Kampot and the provinces of Pursat, Battambang, Pailin, Banteay Mean Chey, Preah Vihea, Oddor Mean Chey, Siem Reap, Koh Kong and Kampong Speu. The in-country theme for this year’s WMD was “working together for a Cambodia without malaria”.

Balloons for release with the slogan “Working together for a Cambodia without Malaria”
The Health Minister, H.E. Dr Mam Bun Heng, was in Kampot for the official commemoration with staff from the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Department, the National Centre for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control (CNM), team members of WHO’s Containment Project, the Malaria Consortium and other partners. In his address to several hundred students, teachers and community health workers at the commemoration, Health Minister Mam Bun Heng reiterated the call by Prime Minister Hun Sen for malaria to be eliminated from Cambodia by 2025.

“I would like to call on all, including the international community and the private sector, to join us in eliminating malaria so that the Kingdom of Cambodia can move toward a future without the disease”, the Minister told the crowd.

The Minister thanked WHO, the Global Fund (GF), international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for supporting the fight against malaria. Addressing the gathering, WHO Cambodia’s MVP Team Leader, Dr Steve Bjorge, emphasized that reducing malaria will help Cambodia achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. “These include not only the goal of reducing malaria, but also goals related to women’s and children’s rights and health and access to education and the reduction of poverty”, he said.
China

In China, diverse campaigns were conducted to commemorate the 4th World Malaria Day. These activities included:

1. Campaign to improve awareness of malaria risks and appropriate protections

In Hainan province, a major campaign was carried out to educate the public at Mingzhu Plaza, led by the Hainan Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Malaria posters were displayed highlighting the epidemic situation, transmission and control measures. Technicians helped the public to understand malaria threats and effective prevention approaches. Several media organizations covered the activities.

A series of campaigns took place in medical institutions in Kunming, Yunnan Province, to enhance public awareness of malaria, including both patients and medical staff. In some schools in Kunming, activities such as seminars, quizzes and broadcasts were conducted to introduce basic knowledge about malaria. News about malaria was put on websites for the public.
Spot consultation in Hunan province
2. Training courses for both medical staff and the public

In Beijing, training courses were conducted in hospitals at both county and township levels, which involved over 1000 medical staff to help first-line staff understand malaria control strategies and technical issues. An evaluation after the training course was carried out to consolidate the results.

Because most malaria cases are imported, the Hainan CDC, in collaboration with community health centres, implemented a joint campaign targeting the mobile population with key topics concerning infection routes, clinical symptoms and prevention tips to help people avoid infection when abroad. About 3000 staff members from 30 enterprises were involved, with great interest expressed in promoting this kind of activity.

Technical training on microscopy and surveillance was implemented in Shandong Province, covering 41 counties and hospitals with 435 trainees.

3. Souvenirs and publicity materials for the public

Many educational tools were used to advocate malaria control such as a giant streamer and consultation activities. In addition, a hotline was set up in Beijing. A total of 20 000 brochures titled “Pay Attention to Malaria When Abroad” were distributed to counties and more than 2000 questions raised by the public were answered. In several communities, malaria videos were displayed to improve public awareness.
In Hainan, a number of souvenirs, such as pamphlets, paintings, fans and towels carrying essential information were distributed. A quiz was conducted, and people who scored more than 60 points received an umbrella showing a malaria slogan. In Yunnan, a total of 2800 pamphlets, four posters and eight steamers were displayed about WMD, together with intervention tools such as specimen vectors and antimalarial drugs.

4. Joint commemoration in border areas

A total of 74 counties covered by the Global Fund support, in collaboration with governmental departments of education, media, entry-exit inspection and quarantine, and from NGOs such as the Red Cross, carried out a diverse information campaign with 2418 staff and 597 volunteers involved. Some 465 streamers, 9316 posters, 475 newsletters and 441 685 booklets were distributed, 408 seminars were conducted in secondary schools and 89 764 public educational activities targeting the mobile population and 66 training courses were conducted throughout Yunnan.

Combined with Sino-Myanmar malaria projects, health centres in Tengchong, Kachin State, and some NGOs such as Health Unlimited (HU), conducted a joint campaign against malaria on the border. The director of Banwa Township of Kachin State delivered a speech to show its commitment to malaria control. People from government departments in Myanmar, such as leaders, women’s organizations, local residents, and scientists and technical staff from China participated in the campaign. A cultural performance focusing on malaria control and prevention information was conducted and attracted many people.

To better understand the status of malaria, a team from the Hainan CDC and the Yunnan Institute of Parasitic Diseases was set up to conduct household surveys in some villages in Kachin State.
The Lao People’s Democratic Republic

The formal WMD 2011 commemoration activity took place in Saravanh Province on 4 June 2011 at the provincial administration building. There were 1700 participants, including administrative staff members, teachers, pupils, students, soldiers, police and members of the public from Saravanh, as well as media from national and provincial levels.
A top-level government delegation was led by H.E. Inlavanh Keobounphanh (Vice Minister of Health). The lead committee that attended the WMD 2011 ceremony in Saravanh Province comprised Mr Khampoun Douangpanya (Party Central Committee, Secretary to the Chairman of the provincial party, Saravanh Provincial Governor); Mr Sisouvanh Vongchonesy (Permanent Party Provincial Committee, Vice Governor of Saravanh Province); Dr Khounaneana Vongsaravan (Director of Saravanh Provincial Health Department); and Dr Bouasy Hongvanthong (Acting Director of the National Center of Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology).

Public awareness campaign activities included a mini-marathon walk (“walking for health”), a health talk by a malaria victim, a demonstration of bed net impregnation, a cultural display by a military group on malaria, a quiz and prize-giving. More than 1700 people received additional information about the malaria burden and its prevention and treatment.
Malaysia

Malaysia organized activities such as exhibitions, lectures, malaria screening, and training activities related to vector control (e.g., nets retreatment and residual spraying). These efforts were in line with achieving the objectives of the National Malaria Strategic Plan for Elimination of Malaria by 2020.

Several events to raise public awareness organized by the Ministry of Health, including exhibitions, health talks, school campaigns and screenings, were held in various states such as Johor, Kelantan, and Terengganu. Some of these events were held over two to three weeks and were targeted at localities with high-risk groups for the transmission of malaria.
Course on preparation of blood films for malaria microscopy, Dungun health clinic
Papua New Guinea

The WMD 2011 commemoration activities were organized jointly and held by the National Department of Health, WHO, Rotarians Against Malaria (RAM) and Population Services International (PSI). The National Department of Health took the lead and provided major financial support. The theme for the country in 2011 was “counting out malaria” (“Yumi Rausim Malaria”).

Students and members of the public mark World Malaria Day in Papua New Guinea
A joint commemoration was held in Lae, Morobe Province on 20 April. The Honorable Sasa Zibe, Member of Parliament and Minister for Health; the Honorable Luther Wenge, Member of Parliament and Governor, of Morobe Province; WHO Representative Dr William Adu-Krow; and RAM President Ron Seddon, from Port Moresby, joined the ceremony and addressed the commemoration. They acknowledged the progress made in controlling malaria in Papua New Guinea, noted the challenge the country is facing, called for a stronger political commitment to malaria control, and for development partner support, community participation, and prompt diagnosis and effective treatment.

Local people, including students, joined the ceremony. Souvenirs such as hand fans with information about malaria diagnosis and treatment and long-lasting insecticidal treated nets were distributed. Students from different schools marched in the streets with the theme, of “counting malaria out”.
The Philippines

In the Philippines, WMD 2011 was commemorated on 30 April in the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Bukidnon, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Kalinga, Misamis Oriental, Nueva Viscaya, Nueva Ecija, Palawan, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Surigao del Sur, Sulu, Zamboanga del Sur, Zambonga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay.
The Global Fund (GF), Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) members, Shell Foundation, Inc (principal recipient of GF funds), Drs Debrework Zewdie and Elmar Vinh-Thomas (GF visitors) and Dr Jeffrey Hii (WR PHL) commemorated WMD in Barangay Concepcion, Puerto Princesa City in Palawan Province. The community parade was led by each tribe donning costumes with malaria motifs and slogans and floats depicting malaria interventions. Eight barangays (villages) participated in the event.

This was followed by a Malaria Awareness Day celebration consisting of rapid diagnosis and treatment; distribution of mosquito nets; malaria information, education and communication games; singing contests; slogans and poster-making contests. Children and the elderly participated in the event, which was complemented by quizzes on facts about malaria and a short survey to check if under-5 children had slept under their nets the previous night.

CCM members and GF visitors took part in monitoring visits, household visits and on-the-spot blood checks in the barangays of San Rafael, Luzviminda and Mangingisda.
In her address to several hundred students, teachers, women’s groups, the indigenous population and community health workers at the commemoration, GF Deputy Executive Director Dr Debrework Zewdie said she was glad to learn that the people are using their mosquito nets every night and was delighted to see the community participation on the fight against malaria.

“She thanked WHO, the local community, international organizations and NGOs for supporting the fight against malaria.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Hii, MVP focal point in the WHO Philippines country office, and the staff of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) facilitated a demonstration of bioassays using live anopheles mosquitoes on LLINs. Dr Hii emphasized that the Philippines is on track to achieving the MDG 6. The national malaria control programme has enjoyed significant political commitment, financial support from GF and WHO-Roll Back Malaria assistance since 2003. This assistance enabled the country to achieve a significant reduction in malaria cases by 76.8% from 2002 to 2008 and a reduction of malaria deaths by 72.3%, he said.
Vanuatu

Two key events to mark WMD 2011 in Vanuatu took place in Epule Village, Shefa Province. These were a village cleanup campaign and a malaria community quiz.

*Community members listening during the village malaria quiz*
Viet Nam

To increase awareness of malaria interventions, WMD 2011 took place in all three regions and several provinces. In the north, the National Institute of Malaria, Parasitology and Entomology (NIMPE), in cooperation with the Hanoi Centre for Preventive Medicine, organized a meeting at the Soc Son District, Ha Noi. In the south, the Institute of Malaria, Parasitology and Entomology (IMPE) in Ho Chi Minh City, in coordination with the Provincial Health Department of Binh Phuoc, held a launching ceremony for WMD on 25 April. In the central region, IMPE in Quy Nhon, in coordination with the Provincial Health Department of Gia Lai, held a ceremony in Kpaklong Park, in the Chu Se District of Gia Lai Province, on 24 April 2011.

Attending each of the ceremonies were representatives of the Provincial People’s Committee, the District People’s Committee, other sectors, staff of the Department of Preventive Medicine (Ministry of Health), the Military Health Department (Ministry of Defence), the leadership and staff of the NIMPE and the IMPEs, the health departments and provincial malaria centres and the centres for preventive medicine in the region and hundreds of members of the public.

At the provincial level, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP), each malaria-endemic province organized district level meetings. These were followed by malaria awareness campaigns.
Ethnic people with IEC material on malaria prevention
World Malaria Day 2011: Progress towards malaria elimination in the Western Pacific

Students in Papua New Guinea mark World Malaria Day celebration
Outputs

1. Information shared with WHO Representatives and Country Liaison Offices by the Regional Director on the significant progress towards malaria elimination and the Western Pacific Regional Office’s perspectives in the next decade.
2. Increased awareness of staff members and guests on the available malaria control interventions in the Region and the progress of concerned Member States towards elimination.
3. Increased awareness through press releases and WMD campaigns at the regional and country levels.
4. From country reports, increased commitment from political and community leaders, government officials and partners to sustain the fight against malaria.
Military cultural show performance at the World Malaria Day 2011 celebration in Lao People’s Democratic Republic
Outcomes

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Exhibition of malaria control & elimination interventions in the Regional Office
Lessons Learned

1. The biannual meeting of the WHO Representatives and Country Liaison Offices in April presented a good platform to share information and solicit support for malaria control and elimination through WHO Country Offices. The activity identified the need for continued use of WMD as an opportunity to advocate for malaria control and elimination as a top priority agenda in the Western Pacific Regional Office.

2. It is important to include other vectorborne and parasitic diseases such as dengue and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

3. There is a need to start preparatory activities sufficiently early (by 1 February every year) and engage relevant staff proactively.
Students, military, police and youth representatives participated in World Malaria Day celebration in Viet Nam.
Recommendations and Way Forward

1. Member States to set aside 25 April every year to commemorate WMD at national and subnational levels, with the active involvement of politicians, technical departments and development partners at the highest level.
2. Country programmes to commemorate WMD activities with a dedicated budget from government, supported by partners.
3. Reports of annual WMD activities to be collated at national levels through WHO Country Offices and published at the Western Pacific Regional level with wide dissemination.
4. Continue tracking of national and regional progress towards the elimination goal.
5. Preparation for annual WMD commemoration should commence as early as the last week in January of every year.
World Malaria Day 2011: Progress towards malaria elimination in the Western Pacific

Health care worker putting up posters in Terengganu, Malaysia
Conclusion

The commemoration of World Malaria Day in the Western Pacific Region is fast becoming a fixture. Countries continue to mark the day with innovative ideas, as shown in many country reports. It is hoped that the main goal of WMD – to eliminate malaria from the Region – will be realized on or before 2020.