

## **Draft Concept Note**

### **Launching of Sahel Malaria Elimination Initiative**

#### **Background**

The Global Malaria Community has set a vision of ending malaria for good. The African Union has also expressed its political aspiration to end malaria. Hence it is prudent to approach the malaria elimination agenda through a sub-regional approach.

In line with this, Ministers of Health of six Sahelian countries (Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal), passed a Declaration on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 in Nouakchott towards acceleration of the fight against malaria. A follow up of implementation of the Declaration, a meeting of malaria program managers of seven countries (Cabo Verde, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal), held in Monaco in June 2017, agreed to accelerate malaria elimination in these countries. A Health Ministers from the sub-region also conducted a follow up meeting at the side of 67<sup>th</sup> WHO AFRO Regional Committee meeting in Zimbabwe in August 2017.

#### **Rationale**

The rationale of Sahel Malaria Elimination Initiative (SaME) is to help accelerate the attainment of the global vision of a world free from the burden of malaria by launching a regional multi-country collaboration platform.

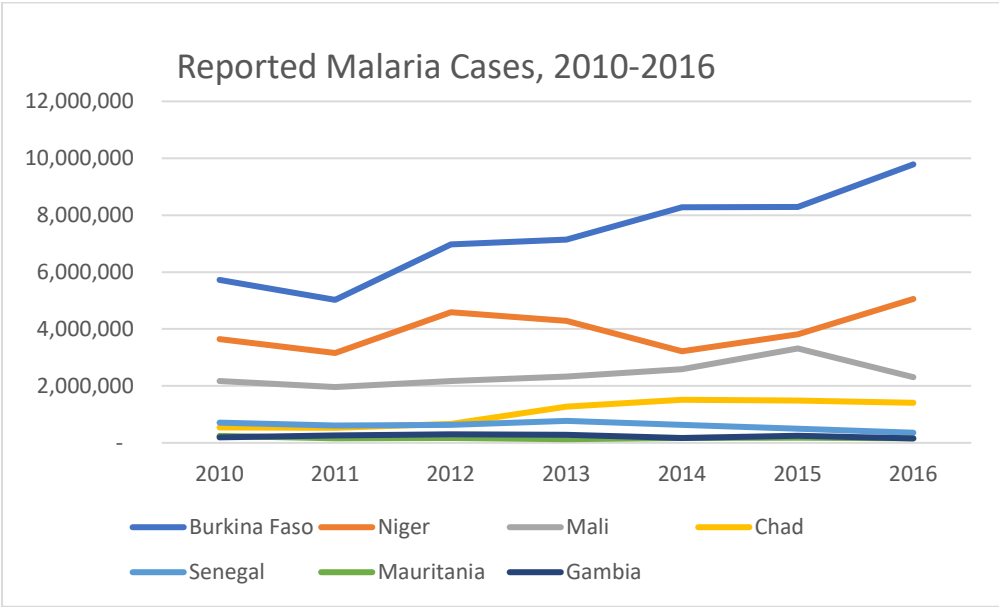
The SaME Initiative is part of the effort of shrinking malaria map from low burden countries to the high burden. With the right level of political engagement and regional capacity building together with the malaria epidemiological and ecological similarity, the countries in the Sahel region can demonstrate the acceleration towards malaria elimination. The initiative will therefore be implemented in eight countries in the Sahel region and others: Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and The Gambia.

The initiative will create an enabling sub-regional approach that will allow the countries in the sub-region to achieve their elimination goals, thus accelerating progress towards a malaria-free world. The countries of the Sahel sub-region continue to express their political commitment to explore measures, means and ways informed by evidence to accelerate towards the attainment of these goals.

Cabo Verde is one of the 21 countries that were part of the WHO E2020 initiative with likelihood of achieving malaria elimination by 2020. These countries, were identified as the most likely to reach zero indigenous cases by 2020. According to WMR 2017 Cabo Verde is on target for malaria free status by 2020. Some countries such as The Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal are reorienting their program towards malaria elimination.

### Sub-regional Malaria Profile

The WHO world malaria report 2017 indicates that the number of reported malaria cases in the sub-region is showing an increasing trend since 2010 except in Cape Verde where local transmission is at the verge of elimination. Annually close to 20 million cases of malaria cases are being reported from the sub-region and about 90 million people are at risk of malaria. The overall incidence of malaria cases among the population at risk in the sub-region is 21%. There is a high variation of the total number of cases among the countries and most of the cases (51%) are being reported from Burkina Faso while the least is reported from The Gambia and Mauritania (1% each). Achieving the goal of malaria elimination is still feasible in the sub-region despite the high malaria morbidity.



Malaria incidence and reported malaria cases in Sahelian Countries, 2016

Country	Incidence (%)	Reported Malaria Cases
Burkina Faso	10.9	9,785,822
Niger	5.7	5,056,393
Mali	2.6	2,311,098

Chad	1.6	1,402,215
Senegal	0.4	356,272
Mauritania	0.2	159,225
Gambia	0.2	155,456
Cabo Verde	0.0	75

## Goal

The goal of the Sahel Malaria initiative is to accelerate towards the attainment of malaria elimination goals by 2030 in the Sub-region.

## Guiding Principle

The guiding principle emanates from the moto “**we achieve more together**” to accelerate the fight against malaria. Therefore, the initiative should

- Be based on strong collaboration and coordination between the member countries, sectors and partners at international and regional levels.
- Support to build a strong national malaria prevention/elimination capacity and the initiative is not supposed to replace any of the malaria or health systems of the countries in the sub-region.
- Be led with high political commitment and country ownership and should ensure sustainable financing mechanism.

## The Main Strategies and Approaches

The countries in the initiative will combine their efforts with the principle of **we achieve more together** to accelerate the fight against malaria; accelerate the implementation of universal access of populations to effective malaria control interventions; further mobilize necessary internal and external financial resources to achieve malaria pre-elimination and elimination; implement joint action plan to accelerate the fight against malaria; develop mechanisms for monitoring progress of the implementation of the joint action plan; and strengthen the institutional capacities of research.

Therefore, the SaME initiative will use the following main approaches to accelerate the combined efforts towards the attainment of malaria elimination in the sub-region.

1. Serving as a platform for regional coordination
2. Keeping malaria elimination high on the development and political agenda

3. Sustainable financing mechanism Policy harmonization, synchronization of planning and resources – (policy and guideline, surveillance and data sharing, planning and conducting of interventions,)
4. Cross-border collaboration and ensuring accountability – Sub-regional malaria Scorecard will be developed and used as a tool for joint monitoring and accountability. The tool will provide a sub-regional overview of malaria trends and policy implementation progress by each country.
5. Platform for fast-track the introduction of innovative and progressive technologies. The initiative will ensure fast-track the introduction of innovative and progressive technologies that will make malaria elimination possible.
6. Re-enforcing the Regional regulatory mechanism - it also facilitates the establishment or re-enforcing the Regional regulatory mechanism which also enables the region not only to ensure the quality of malaria commodities but also to facilitate fast track introduction of new tools.
7. Establish malaria observatory and best practice sharing - efficient disease surveillance and information sharing

## **Enabling Environment**

The strong political commitment, and the willingness of countries to control malaria and to resolutely move towards its elimination; The partners engagement; Global momentum towards malaria elimination; epidemiological feasibility of malaria elimination; lessons learned from other regional initiatives.

### ***Disease epidemiology:***

Relatively low incidence of malaria trend over many years and the promising gains in Cabo Verde and the fact that all the countries in the sub-region except Cabo Verde share the same geographical area and have socio-cultural similarities as well as epidemiological features characterized by a seasonal malaria transmission.

### ***Political commitment:***

In Nouakchott Declaration Ministers of Health agreed to:

- Combine our efforts through this initiative to accelerate the fight against malaria;
- Accelerate the implementation of universal access of populations to effective control interventions to significantly reduce cases and deaths from malaria in perspective of the malaria pre-elimination;

- Further mobilize the necessary internal and external financial resources to achieve the malaria pre-elimination;
- Implement the joint action plan to accelerate the fight against malaria based on effective interventions and taking into account vulnerable populations, including refugees and displaced persons;
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring progress of the implementation of the joint action plan to accelerate the fight against malaria;
- Reinforce the institutional capacities of research institutions and programs in the framework of the global reinforcement of the health system;

Partners has already shown their interest to support this initiative. Currently, all targeted 8 countries are in control or pre-elimination (Cabo Verde) phase and are moving towards universal coverage for all interventions for prevention and control of malaria.

## **Governance Structure and Management**

Experience shows that a coordination mechanism linked with an existing sub-regional mechanism is a crucial step forward. Similar management and coordination mechanism among the countries in the region will be important to advance the works of the initiative and the efforts of the 8 countries. We recommend that the coordination mechanism for the Sahel Malaria Elimination Initiative be embedded into ECOWAS/ WAHO.

The Ministers of Health of the eight countries will give final decision on the governance structure of the SaME initiative and the mechanisms and functions of collaboration necessary for malaria elimination at the side meeting to be held during AU summit in Nouakchott in June 2018.

## **Championing and Ambassadors**

One way of keeping the Sahel malaria elimination initiative high on the political agenda is through selecting champions and ambassadors. In order to realize the well establishment of SaME, RBM Partnership and WHO will work with countries to identify championing and ambassadors of the initiative. The champions and ambassadors will include Heads of States, First Ladies, Ministers of Health, RBM Partnership Board Members and Others.

## Partnerships

The role of partners in ensuring the achievement of the acceleration of the malaria elimination goal could not be achieved without the engaging the key regional and global partners working in the area of malaria prevention, health and development. The potential partners include ECOWAS/WAHO, WHO, RBM Partnership to End Malaria, African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), Global Fund, Academia, International and local NGOs, Government of Monaco, Bilateral organizations, PMI, Malaria Control and Elimination Partnership in Africa (MACEPA), private sectors and many more.

## Next Steps

- The initiative should build on the Nouakchott Declaration and be anchored on an existing regional structure with capacity to leverage political engagement at Ministerial level. Accordingly identifying the appropriate regional structure, and forging consensus should be made.
- There is an urgent need to support countries to reorient the National Programs towards the elimination of malaria based on a solid situation analysis, stratification and development of a road map, based on evidence, against the background of the global malaria technical strategy.
- Develop a regional strategy for malaria elimination for the Sahel countries including cross border actions.
- Conduct advocacy and awareness creation campaigns including identifying a championing country and an ambassador for the elimination of malaria in the Sahel.
- Agree on a sub-regional platform for the sustainability of funding for malaria elimination.