



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

ADDRESS by

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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

on the occasion of

WORLD MALARIA DAY
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Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are celebrating today the World Malaria Day with the global message of “End Malaria for Good”. The World Malaria Day theme provides a common platform for countries to showcase their successes in malaria control and unify diverse initiatives in the changing global context.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Islamic Republic of Iran and its partners, in making achievements towards the target of Malaria Elimination. Iran has been nominated as one of the best practice in the region.

This success achieved has been the result of sustained political will, smart investment, innovative approaches and continued technical support despite the

changing characteristics of the disease and the existence of external risks for reintroduction of the disease.

From a global perspective, Malaria mortality has decreased by 60 percent, with 6.2 million lives saved since the year 2000. Between 2000 and 2015, 57 countries have been able to reduce the number of malaria cases by almost 75 percent.

We know that investing in Malaria has one of the highest returns in health: for every dollar spent on Malaria reduction and elimination, there is up to sixty dollars' worth of benefits.

Eliminating malaria will make the world a safer place for future generations and enable millions of people reach their full potential. Malaria elimination is not only a national target but also a global mission.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the Eastern Mediterranean region, the number of confirmed malaria cases decreased from 2 million in 2000 to 1.5 million in 2014. Two countries account for 91% of cases in 2014: Sudan (72%) and Pakistan (19%). Seven countries including Iran, achieved more than 75% decrease in the incidence of microscopically confirmed cases between 2000 and 2014.

In Iran, the total reported indigenous Malaria cases in 2015 were 156, of which 13 were Malaria Falciparum and this shows a significant decrease even when compared with the year 2014.

During last years the Ministry of Health of Iran with the support and contribution of different partners and stakeholders updated the national strategic plan for malaria and implemented the national programme by scaling up diagnostic and treatment capacity, monitoring insecticide resistance and applying vector control measures.

Despite these successes there is a need for continued vigilance and support in all areas and the strengthening of capacities in some of them. Integrated Vector Management is one of the cross cutting issues that needs special attention by the leadership in the Ministry of Health. The initial plan for establishing a vector control unit has yet to be realized. This requires greater political will, inter-sectoral collaboration, and better coordination between Food and Health High council level.

Sustained quality assurance of the diagnosis of malaria and the establishment of a slide bank are some of the recommendations of WHO that needs to be supported in future. Similarly, community based approaches and people-centred responses should be expanded to ensure early detection and efficient treatment, especially for marginal and mobile populations, cross border movements and hidden migrants.

Another important issue for the Ministry of Health is to outline a clear exit strategy as the Global Fund support will come to an end towards the end of this year. This is essential as there is no desire to see the reversal of the

successes achieved in the last few years and this needs the special attention of the Ministry of Health and the CCM.

Iran is one of target countries for Malaria Elimination by 2020. Iran can achieve it by the year 2017 and it would be important to document this experience as the best practices. This implies that the health authorities have to sustain high-level political commitment to fight malaria, make available the needed resources including new investments in disease surveillance, health systems strengthening and research, and the use of new tools to tackle emerging drug and insecticide resistance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to wish you a highly successful meeting and congratulate your achievements in Malaria Elimination and other health interventions.

As WHO, we look forward to supporting the Ministry of Health in developing and documenting Iran's experience as the best practice and celebrating the World Malaria Day in 2017 by when Iran would have eliminated Malaria.

Thank you