



A Malaria Week Dialogue: Strong Surveillance Systems and Timely Reporting

Introduction

APLMA is supporting the Government of Viet Nam to host a virtual Malaria Week this year. The main event of the week will be the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). In the days leading up to the SOM, there will be thematic sessions, including one on strengthening disease surveillance systems and timely reporting. This note describes the background, objectives and proposed focus of the surveillance systems and reporting session.

Logistics

- **Date: 8 September 2020**
- **Time: 13:00 hrs Hanoi time**
- Duration: 120 minutes
- Format: Moderated discussion
- Co-chairs: Prof Tikki Pangestu (Board Chair, APLMA) and Dr Nafsiah Mboi (Former Minister of Health – Indonesia, Former Leaders' Envoy and APLMA Board Chair)

Background

- In 2014, the Asia Pacific region committed to eliminating malaria by 2030 and the region is getting closer to meeting this goal. However, as the disease retreats to **hard-to-reach areas** and largely being confined to groups like migrant and forest workers, ability to **map, prevent, test and treat everywhere** becomes critical to malaria elimination strategy in order to reach the **last mile**.
- The threat of COVID-19 has tested the responsiveness of health systems and highlighted the need for robust surveillance systems, including adequate mechanisms to test, trace and treat cases. It has reinforced the importance of **real time data sharing** for true representation of the spread of the disease and to inform countries' policy decisions.
- Sustaining the momentum towards malaria elimination demands a shift to **innovative surveillance and response mechanisms**, with **data reported transparently** in real time. This requires engagement of various actors such as **public and private sector, military, and community organisations**. It also requires timely and systematic **reporting of all cases** to support malaria elimination efforts. Many countries are moving towards making malaria a notifiable disease to ensure timely reporting from all the providers.
- As countries recognise the need to prioritise effective service delivery, there has been a strong push for **better use of data** to support programmatic and financial decision-making. This includes **investments in information systems**, which are vital to capture, collate and analyse data for case management, vector surveillance, and procurement and distribution of malaria commodities.

Objectives/Outcomes

The session will:

1. reflect on **importance of strong surveillance systems and real time data** during COVID-19 pandemic and for other infectious diseases;
2. highlight **gaps** in current malaria surveillance and reporting systems and ways to improve them;
3. discuss the **policy process in making malaria a notifiable disease** and identify **stakeholders** critical to the process and,
4. provide **recommendations to improve** surveillance in hard-to-reach communities.

Key topics / questions

Strong surveillance systems and timely reporting

Surveillance is a core component of effective system to support malaria elimination. Effective surveillance data will help countries to monitor progress towards elimination, deploy resources more efficiently, and devise targeted interventions to the last remaining at-risk places.

Issues to discuss:

1. What can we **learn from COVID-19** on importance of strong surveillance system and real-time data to guide interventions and policies?
2. What is the policy process in making malaria a **notifiable disease** and how to effectively engage with different stakeholders involved in the process?
3. What are some of the **innovative surveillance mechanisms and technologies** to cover at-risk populations?

Tentative Program

Time	Themes	Presenter
13:00	Introduction Opening Remarks	Prof Tikki Pangestu (Board Chair, APLMA) Dr Nafsiah Mboi (Former Minister of Health – Indonesia, Former Leaders’ Envoy and APLMA Board Chair)
Strong surveillance systems and timely reporting		
13:10	Strengthening infectious disease surveillance systems: A regional perspective <i>What have we learnt from COVID-19 and how can these lessons be used to improve surveillance for other diseases?</i>	Ms Bridie Rushton (Deputy Head, Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security)
13: 20	Making malaria a notifiable disease: Key policy considerations (legislation, investments in infrastructure, multi-sectoral engagement) <i>Drawing lessons from China’s management of COVID-19 and malaria – both notifiable diseases</i>	Dr Gao Qi (Senior Professor, Jiangsu Institute of Parasitic Diseases, China)
13:30	Strengthening malaria surveillance: Reaching at-risk populations	Dr Neeraj Dhingra (Director, India)

	<i>Learning from India's efforts to reach hard-to-reach populations including those in tribal and border areas</i>	NVBDCP)
Break (5 mins)		
Breakout Sessions		
13:45	<p>Following issue to be discussed:</p> <p>Country Experiences: What are some of the key strategies adopted by your country to improve surveillance and timely reporting of malaria and how has COVID_19 impacted it. What works?</p>	<p>Breakout co-chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Serene Joseph, Technical officer- Neglected Tropical Diseases- WHO – Indonesia Country Office
14:45	Wrap up: summary of discussions and priority actions	Breakout co-chair – Dr Serene Joseph
14:57	Closing remarks	Prof Tikki Pangestu and Dr Nafsiah Mboi
15:00	End of call	