

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix – Travail – Patrie

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MINISTERE DE LA SANTE PUBLIQUE

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SECRETARIAT GENERAL

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DIRECTION DE LA LUTTE CONTRE LA MALADIE,  
LES EPIDEMIES ET LES PANDEMIES

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PROGRAMME NATIONAL DE LUTTE  
CONTRE LE PALUDISME

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SECRETARIAT PERMANENT

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace – Work – Fatherland

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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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GENERAL SECRETARIAT

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DIRECTORATE FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST  
DISEASE, EPIDEMICS AND PANDEMICS

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NATIONAL MALARIA CONTROL  
PROGRAMME

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PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

# **PRESS DECLARATION OF THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE 13<sup>th</sup> WORLD MALARIA DAY**

**25<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020**

**ENGLISH VERSION**

**The Country Representative of the World Health Organization,  
The Secretary of State of Public Health in charge of the fight against  
epidemics and pandemics;**

**Madam Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Health,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of Partner Organizations;  
Representatives of Civil Society Organizations;**

**Dear media men and women;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Cameroon joins the international community on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to commemorate the 13<sup>th</sup> World Malaria Day (WMD). The theme this year is **‘Zero malaria, Starts with Me ’**. It is time to mark the successes achieved in the fight against malaria, to underline each person’s responsibility in eliminating malaria within a generation and to encourage political leaders to step up the fight to bring us closer to a malaria-free world. This year, progress is threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic and we must, more than ever, ensure that concrete action is taken to continue saving lives.

The assessment made after these past twenty (20) years of intense efforts against this disease, shows a significant reduction in malaria prevalence in the world and in Cameroon in particular. At the national level, the prevalence rate of malaria has reduced from 30% in 2011 to 24% in 2018. This result is the result of the implementation of policies and strategies such as:

- Free Intermittent Preventive Treatment for pregnant women since 2005;
- Free treatment of uncomplicated and severe malaria in children under 5 since February 2011 and 2014 respectively;
- The reduction of the cost of diagnosis and treatment of simple malaria in health facilities to less than 500 F CFA;
- Free distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets (LLINs) to the entire population and

- Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention for children aged 03 to 59 months in the Far North and North regions during heavy rains, implemented since 2016.

Despite these efforts, malaria remains a public health problem and has been on the rise since 2016. In total, about 6 million cases and eleven thousand (11,000) deaths occur each year and children under the age of 5 account for around 60% of cases and deaths.

According to data from the National Malaria Control Program in 2018, nine million three hundred and ninety-six thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine (9 396 959) people consulted in our health facilities, among whom two million one hundred and thirty-nine thousand four hundred and eighty-two (2,139,482) malaria cases were registered, giving a morbidity rate of 28% compared to 25.9% in 2018. In terms of mortality, out of the twenty-four thousand five hundred and ninety-three (24 593) recorded deaths, four thousand five hundred and ten (4 510) were attributed to malaria, giving a mortality rate of 18.3% against 14.3% in 2018. According to the World Malaria Report 2018, WHO ranks Cameroon 11th among the most affected countries.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

The initial analyses to understand the decline malaria control results have identified some immediate causes namely: insufficient coverage of the population with control tools such as mosquito nets and effective drugs; low utilization of health services; insufficient involvement of communities in health actions; lack of coordination of actions carried out by different sectors; behaviors that increase malaria transmission and threats such as vector resistance to insecticides.

Faced with this situation, the Government is committed to the new WHO initiative called “High Burden to High Impact” (HBHI) which aims to put countries and development partners back on track. to achieve national and global goals and targets. In line with this initiative, the 2019 - 2023 National Malaria Control Strategic

Plan presents four pillars needed to achieve significant reduction of malaria in Cameroon by 2023:

These pillars are:

- i. Strengthening political will;
- ii. Strategic use of information for decision-making;
- iii. Adopting the best malaria policies and strategies and
- iv. Coordination of the national response.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, dear partners;**

The political will of the Government of Cameroon to fight against malaria cannot be overemphasized. To meet the needs in malaria control, the State has increased the budget allocated to this fight over the last five years. Public funding in this area increased from 1.4 billion in 2013 to reach a peak of 7.1 billion in 2015. In total, between 2013 and 2019, almost 20 billions FCFA domestic funds were mobilized for the fight against malaria despite other national priorities. These resources have allowed us, among other things to:

1. Organize 03 LLIN mass distribution campaigns in 2011, 2015/2016 and 2019 with the support of partners;
2. Organize seasonal malaria chemoprevention campaigns for children under five in the regions eligible for this intervention;
3. Ensure the supply of antimalarial commodities to health facilities and communities and
4. Monitor the implementation of malaria control activities at all levels.

However, much effort still needs to be made. For the period 2020 - 2023, about two hundred and eighty (280) billions FCFA are needed for the fight against malaria. We cannot achieve this goal without increasing funding for health, hence the ongoing reforms in the health sector. We are also counting on the mobilization of additional funds from decentralized local authorities, the private sector and through innovative financing.

The second pillar of the National Strategic Plan provides for the strategic use of information for decision-making. Much effort is being made to computerize our National Health Information System with the DHIS2 software. In this light, we have improved disease surveillance in order for decisions to be taken based on evidence.

Concerning the adoption of policies and strategies, 3rd pillar of the Strategic Plan, this includes:

**Prevention of malaria** through vector control and chemoprevention to pregnant women and children under five:

With regard to vector control, in a context such as ours with areas of intense and perennial malaria transmission, we recommend the systematic use of long-lasting insecticide treated bed nets (LLINs).

A third LLINs distribution campaign was started in 2019 with the objective to distribute about 15 million LLINs. We plan to continue this distribution of treated mosquito bed nets in the 11 remaining health districts of the Littoral region and in the North-West, South-West and Center regions before the end of the year. Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in these regions, we will adapt the campaign strategies in order to respect the prevention measures of this new pandemic and protect the actors involved. This is important to continue protecting the population from the consequences of malaria.

As regards chemoprevention, pregnant women receive free monthly intermittent preventive treatment from the fourth month of pregnancy during antenatal consultations to ensure good health of the baby. In addition to these prevention strategies, the Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SPC) campaign is implemented in the Far North and Far North regions in children aged 03 to 59 months during the heavy rains season. (July - October). The procedures for implementing these activities in the context of COVID-19 will be communicated to regional managers.

**Concerning the case management strategy**, today, because of the protective effect of LLINs, in case of fever, one should no longer make a presumption of malaria. However, in the current context of health crisis where the supply system is overloaded with the distribution of commodities relating to the response to COVID-19, some health facilities may find themselves out of stock for rapid diagnostic tests. Exceptionally, these peripheral health units are authorized to perform presumptive treatments instead of performing poor quality microscopy. Nevertheless, we have instructed health officials to ensure the permanent availability of essential drugs in health facilities despite the context of COVID-19 to avoid an increase in other cases of illness. Health professionals are provided with individual protective equipment to protect themselves and the sick when administering care.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This day of commemoration is an opportunity for each of us to question what he/she does on a daily basis to overcome this disease in his household, his/her community and in his/her country. I invite each of us to make the fight against malaria a daily challenge in his family, community and work place. As malaria is an environmental and behavioral disease, we want to emphasize the importance of a multisectoral approach to the fight. At these different levels, every action, no matter how small, counts.

The results recorded in the fight against malaria to date are the fruit of an effective partnership policy. In addition to national resources, the National Malaria Control Program benefits from the support of technical and financial partners including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, who allocated a sum of one hundred and one million two hundred and forty-five thousand seven hundred and ninety (101,245,790) euros (or sixty-six 66.4 billion FCFA) to Cameroon for the fight against malaria during the period 2021 - 2023. This is the result of a high level advocacy led by our Head of State His Excellency President **Paul Biya** in 2019 in

Lyon (France), during the replenishment of funding for this donor. Funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) called the “President’s Malaria Initiative” (**PMI**) has enabled us to implement an adequate response to the disease in the North and Far North regions. We cannot forget our technical partners such as WHO and UNICEF, who continue to provide continuous support to the Government in the fight against malaria.

To this end, I have the honor to thank all our technical and financial partners who accompany us every day in the fight against this scourge. We will continue to count on your multifaceted support: technical, logistic, financial to sustain the commendable results achieved.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I believe that this celebration allows everyone to take stock of the challenge that Cameroon faces in order to reverse the curve and achieve the goals set and I know we are up to the task.

**Long live International Cooperation,**

**May God bless Cameroon,**

**I thank you for your kind attention. / -**