



Presentation of Credentials by Dr Jorge M. Luna to H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr Jorge M. Luna, WHO Representative to Myanmar presented his credentials to H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 November 2014.

At the meeting, they discussed matters for further strengthening collaboration between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the World Health Organization. ■



National Measles-Rubella (MR) Vaccination Campaign-2015

Tremendous progress has been made globally to reduce the contribution of measles to the burden of childhood deaths and measles cases have dramatically decreased. As a result the Global Vaccine Action Plan, endorsed by the World Health Assembly, has targeted measles elimination in at least five of the six World Health Organization Regions by 2020. This is an ambitious goal, since measles control requires the highest immunization coverage of any vaccine preventable disease, which means that the health system must be able to reach every community. Measles harms not only the individual but also the community. Persons with measles can transmit infection to children who are too young to be vaccinated yet are still susceptible. Because of its high level of contagiousness, measles is the indicator disease for weaknesses of an immunization programme. With gaps in immunization coverage, measles is often the first vaccine-preventable disease one sees, indicating that a theoretical problem, low immunization coverage, has been converted into

a real problem of disease, disability, and deaths.

In order to meet the goal of Measles Elimination and Rubella Control, Myanmar will be conducting a National MR Vaccination campaign in January and February 2015. The target is to vaccinate around 17.4 million children in the age group of 9 months to 15 years.

- First phase: 19 January to 26 January - School based immunization will take place in all public, private, religious schools
- Second phase: 19 February to 28 February - Community based vaccination for children 9 months to 5 years old, plus all children who were left out, drop out or missed school vaccination

Following MR Campaign, EPI programme will introduce rubella vaccination as part of routine immunization, Hence the Measles vaccine given to children at 9th month of age will be replaced by MR vaccine. The second dose of measles vaccine will continue at 18th month. ■

Annual evaluation meeting of the Vector Borne Disease Control Programme



H.E Deputy Minister for Health Dr. Thein Thein Htay delivered the opening speech at the annual evaluation meeting of VBDC programme in Nay Pyi Taw.

The annual evaluation meeting of the Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (VBDC) was held in Nay Pyi Taw during 26-28 November, 2014. H.E Deputy Minister for Health Dr. Thein Thein Htay opened the meeting and delivered the opening speech.

VBDC staff from Central Office (Nay Pyi Taw) and from all States and Regions, Dr. Krongthong Thimasarn (Medical Officer-Malaria, WHO/Myanmar) and other WHO staff, representatives from donor organizations and partner organizations such as UNOPS, JICA, USAID, URC and MORU attended the meeting.

During the annual evaluation meeting, Central and State/Regional VBDC teams presented current situation of malaria and other vector borne diseases, activities and achievements in 2014, as well as challenges encountered in respective areas.

Dr. Krongthong Thimasarn presented the updates on artemisinin resistance and the new initiative on *Plasmodium falciparum* Malaria Elimination Strategy in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).

Currently, Myanmar has the highest malaria burden among six GMS countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, PR China (Yunan Province), Thailand and Viet Nam. Myanmar reported about 70% of total malaria cases in GMS. In Cambodia, high treatment failure of ACT (Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy) is observed, whereas treatment outcomes in Myanmar generally remain good.

Since Artemisinin resistance is independently emerged in several locations of GMS countries, elimination of *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria in GMS countries was recommended by the Malaria Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) to WHO Global Malaria Programme (GMP) in September 2014. At the 9th East Asia Summit in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 November 2014, leaders of GMS countries agreed to the goal of an Asia Pacific free of Malaria by 2030. During the workshop on the elimination of *Falciparum* malaria from GMS conducted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 20-21 November 2014, the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) of Myanmar also committed to eliminate *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria by 2030, and *Plasmodium vivax* malaria by 2035. ■

Training of Trainers workshop for field data assistants (Malaria)



Participants at the refresher training of trainer workshop for field data assistants in Nay Pyi Taw.

WHO Country Office Myanmar Malaria Unit organized a Refresher training workshop for field data assistants from 22nd to 27th December 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw.

National Professional Officer (M&E), National Technical Officer (Surveillance), Central Project Coordinator and Central Training Coordinator from WHO provided a year-end review, revision, updating and upgrading of data assistants on basic computer skills, Microsoft Office Basics and other necessary skills for data entry and encoding. Data assistants were trained how to compile routinely reported data from implementing partners, how to use new forms and data entry templates for the activities under Regional Artemisinin Initiative (RAI) project, and how to encode data from migrant mapping survey by using EpiData software.

Data assistants were given refresher training on formula calculation for various indicators according to project needs. Data assistants also updated the list of health facilities and villages in their data entry templates for the upcoming year, and exercised to assist Vector Borne Disease Control (VBDC) staff in preparing VBDC Annual Reports.

The Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) of UN offered a resource person to train data assistants on the use of some basic GIS techniques such as application of Introduction of Geographic Information System (GIS) and Google Map Basics. Data assistants actively participated in practical exercises on mapping and use of Google Map.

During the training workshop, data assistants made individual presentations on overview of their work, and issues/challenges encountered in their respective assigned areas. After each presentation, all participants discussed on the issues and feedback was also provided.

Staff from Central VBDC team and focal persons from VBDC M&E section attended the training workshop and participated by discussing their issues and challenges with field data assistants from various areas. Central data assistants stationed in Naypyitaw Central VBDC office and WHO Country Office Myanmar Malaria Unit negotiated with field data assistants regarding reporting time-line and data needs of respective projects. ■



Opening address by Dr. Krongthong Thimasarn, Acting WHO Representative to Myanmar.

World Sight Day commemoration ceremony was conducted at the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 October 2014.

The opening speech was delivered by H.E. Dr. Than Aung, Union Minister for Health followed by an address by Dr. Krongthong Thimasarn, Acting WHO Representative to Myanmar.

The ceremony was attended by H.E. Dr. Win Myint and H.E. Dr. Thein Thein Htay, Deputy Ministers for Health, Directors General from the Ministry of Health, Representatives from MMCWA and MWAFA and other national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

World Sight Day (WSD) is an annual day of awareness, to focus global attention on blindness, visual impairment and rehabilitation of the visually impaired held on the second Thursday in October of each year.

Lions Club International partnered with blindness prevention organizations worldwide commemorated the first World

Sight Day on October 8, 1998. This event was later integrated into VISION 2020, a global initiative that IAPB (International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness) coordinates.

World Sight Day is observed around the world by all partners involved in preventing visual impairment or restoring sight. It is also the main advocacy event for the prevention of blindness and for "VISION 2020: The Right to Sight", a global effort to prevent blindness created by WHO and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness.

"VISION 2020: The Right to Sight" is the global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness, a joint programme of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), with its international membership of NGOs, professional associations, eye care institutions and corporations.

Vision 2020 member organizations are working together to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2020, in order to give everyone in the world the Right to Sight. ■

important dates

25 January 2015	World Leprosy Day
26 January - 3 February 2015	136th WHO Executive Board session
24 March 2015	World Tuberculosis Day
7 April 2015	World Health Day