

High-level malaria meeting in Nay Pyi Taw

There is a concern for antimalarial drugs resistance in Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries- Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. There is a risk of antimalarial drugs resistance spreading to the global South. The GMS is addressing cross border threat by adopting "One Region One Strategy" approach to eliminate malaria by 2030.

The 'Ministerial Call for Action to eliminate malaria in the GMS by 2030' was adopted by GMS countries in the high-level meeting on 8 December 2017. Delegates from Ministries of Health from GMS countries, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region and Dr Shin Young-soo, Regional Director of WHO Western Pacific Region graced the occasion. The meeting was hosted by Ministry of Health and Sports



Myanmar with the support from WHO, Asia Pacific Leaders' Malaria Alliance and UNOPS. One of the key activities during malaria week during December 2017, the meeting agreed key actions towards malaria elimination by 2030.

Monsoon preparedness

Myanmar is prone to various natural hazards. Historical data show that there have been natural disasters every few years. The humanitarian community in Myanmar, represented by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), developed and regularly updates the inter-agency Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Plan to support the Government of the Union of Myanmar in preparing for, and responding to, hazards that may affect the country.

For the coming monsoon season, WHO already

supported interagency emergency health kits (IEHK) to Sittwe, Rathedaung, Buthidaung and Maungdaw township health departments in Rakhine State to ensure timely health response during emergencies in monsoon. Furthermore, WHO will preposition IEHK in Kachin state to support the emergency response in monsoon. WHO is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health and Sports for disease surveillance and early warning, alert and response system to prevent avoidable deaths from disease outbreaks.

July to September is the usual influenza season in Myanmar coinciding with the monsoon. Learning from H1N1 event in 2017, preparedness for coming influenza season is critical to be able to prevent, detect and timely respond. WHO is supporting the MoHS in strengthening clinical management, influenza surveillance and lab detection system. A preparedness meeting for coming influenza season was held on 24 February 2018 at Department of Medical Research in Yangon. In this context, community participation to adopt hygiene practice, especially hand washing, and following the advice by health authorities, are important to prevent and control influenza. WHO will continue to provide emergency health assistance in collaboration with health partners and the national health authorities.



A WHO staff on an assessment of disaster affected communities

Launching ceremony of standardized health messages booklet



A display at the launching ceremony of standardized health messages booklet in Nay Pyi Taw.

Health literacy refers to “ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health for themselves, their families and their communities.” Health literacy plays an important role in improving health status of Myanmar through improving access to health information and capacity to use the information effectively.

WHO welcomed the initiative of Ministry of Health and Sports in developing the standardized health messages booklet. It will be very valuable to improve community based healthcare activities in the country. Union Minister of Health and Sports, HE Dr Myint Htwe and WHO Representative to Myanmar, Dr Stephan Paul Jost, addressed the inaugural launch in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 October 2017. WHO exhibited a booth with various health messages. Follow up work continues. Importantly, a workshop on 5 March 2018 is leading to translation of the booklet into ethnic languages.

Antimicrobial resistance

Antibiotics are medicines used to prevent and treat bacterial infections. Antimicrobial resistance is the ability of microbes to resist the effects of antibiotics – that is, the germs are not killed, and their growth is not stopped. As a result, standard treatments become ineffective, infections persist, may spread to others. Misuse and overuse of antimicrobial drugs in human and animals have put every nation at risk from antimicrobial resistance. This problem leads to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and increased mortality. Without sustained action on a global scale, antibiotic resistance will be one of the biggest threats to global health, food security and development in future.

WHO is working closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in a ‘One Health’ approach to tackle this problem. World Antibiotic Awareness Week campaign was commemorated by Ministry of Health and Sports in collaboration with veterinary sector during November 2017. The theme for this year campaign is ***Seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional before taking antibiotics***. Further, Department of Medical Research organized a symposium on antimicrobial resistance during health research congress in January 2018.



Important dates

24 March 2018: World TB Day

7 April 2018: World Health Day

25 April 2018: World Malaria Day

24-30 April 2018: World Immunization Week

31 May 2018: World No Tobacco Day

14 June 2018: World Blood Donor Day

National biosafety and biosecurity guideline launched

Biosafety and biosecurity is an important area to mitigate spread of highly infectious diseases. Joint external evaluation of International Health Regulations highlighted the importance of biosafety and biosecurity guideline development. National biosafety and biosecurity guideline was launched by the National Health Laboratory, Ministry of Health and Sports at Yangon on 20 November 2017. During the ceremony, the National Health Laboratory encouraged all health laboratories to adopt laboratory safety practices according to the guideline and WHO highlighted importance of biosafety and biosecurity for safe lab environment.

Proper disposal of used sharps into designated sharps container



Key messages for safety on Myanmar roads

Do's for driving

- Wear helmet on motorcycle. Child motorcycle passenger must wear the helmet.
- Fasten seat belt.
- Use car safety seat for baby and young child.
- Slow down and stop before reaching pedestrian crossing the road.
- Keep maximum safe distance from the front car to have adequate time and distance to stop safely. The best is to use the "three-second rule" - your car should pass a fixed object 3-4 seconds after the car ahead of you passed the same object. On express way, it should be at least 4 seconds.
- Ensure other road users are aware of your intentions – signal early and clearly;
- Check car break, engine, tyres, lights regularly and take necessary repairs. Check all before long trip.

Don'ts for driving

- Don't drive without license
- Don't drive against the road traffic direction.
- Don't drive over speed limits (urban road speed limit **48 km/hr**, rural road speed limit **80 km/hr**, and **100 km/hr** for expressway). While raining, don't speed over **60 km/hr**.
- Don't drink - drive, feeling tired, angry or upset
- Don't cross/jump red light
- Don't over pass dangerously
- Don't use mobile phone
- Don't transport children less than 6 years old on motorcycle.

Do's for pedestrians

- Wear white or bright colors.
- Walk along the road on the side that you can always see the vehicles before running pass you on the roads.
- Must always look out before stepping out to cross the road, and stay focused.
- If outside Yangon, when crossing roads and large vehicles have stopped for you, be careful that some motorcycle may not stop likewise.

Don'ts for pedestrians

- Don't play on the road or on the road sides.
- Don't cross the road during green traffic light for cars.



Police check for driver license

Japanese Encephalitis vaccination campaign achievement

The Ministry of Health and Sports with the support from development partners, WHO, UNICEF, GAVI and PATH, launched nationwide Japanese Encephalitis vaccination campaign in the last quarter of 2017. It was the second largest public health intervention in Myanmar after measles rubella vaccination campaign in 2015.

The campaign aimed to achieve rapid reductions in morbidity and mortality associated with Japanese Encephalitis by targeting age groups of children from 9 months to 15 years in 2 phases. The first phase covered all 5 to 15 years children in schools (November 15-23, 2017). The second phase covered 9 months to 5 years children in the community (December 11-20, 2017).

The advocacy was conducted in all States and Regions with stakeholders before the campaign. The WHO prequalified vaccine was used in the campaign. During the campaign, 12.58 million children were vaccinated against targeted 13.6 million children,



Children happily showing vaccination cards

resulting in nationwide coverage of 92.5%.

The campaign was very successful with the efforts of health staff at all levels and active engagement of local leaders and volunteers. The success of the campaign was followed by introduction of JE vaccine into the national vaccination calendar, from January 2018 onwards.

World Tuberculosis Day

Tuberculosis (TB) is the top infectious disease in Myanmar. Globally, 10.4 million people fell ill with TB, and 1.7 million people died from the disease. In Myanmar, around 140,000 people were found and treated in one year. Most of them were successfully cured by free treatment. However, around 50,000 TB patients are not receiving diagnosis or appropriate treatment in Myanmar every year.

World TB day, observed on March 24, is designed to build public awareness about TB and efforts to eliminate the disease. March 24 commemorates the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch presented his discovery of the cause of tuberculosis, the TB bacillus.

The theme of the World TB Day of this year is **"Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world"** focuses on building commitment to end TB, not only at the political level but at all levels from community. All can be leaders of efforts to end TB in their own work or terrain.

WHO will support World TB day event in all states and regions of Myanmar to facilitate efforts to ending TB.

World Health Day 2018 focussing on UHC

The World Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated every year on 7 April, under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization, as

well as other related organizations. World Health Day 7 April 2018 will mark 70th anniversary of founding the World Health Organization.

The theme of 2018 World Health Day is: **Universal health coverage: everyone, everywhere.** The slogan is **"Health for All"**.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) means that all people and communities receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. UHC enables everyone to access the services that address the most important causes of disease and death and ensures that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health of the people.

