



# MALARIA DAY IN THE AMERICAS 2007:

## Guidelines for Commemoration, Communications, and Advocacy

### I. Background

In September 2005, the 46th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization adopted Resolution [CD46.R13](#) which highlighted, among other things, the need to establish policies and operational plans to achieve a reduction of the malaria burden by at least 50% by 2010 and 75% by 2015; and to designate a Malaria Control Day in the Americas on a selected annual date, to recognize past and current efforts to prevent and control malaria, promote awareness, and monitor progress. Similarly, in May 2007, the 60th World Health Assembly passed resolution [WHA60.18](#): “Malaria, including a proposal for establishment of *World Malaria Day*” which provides, among other things, that: “*World Malaria Day* shall be commemorated annually on 25 April or on such other day or days as individual members may decide ...” Guyana, which has been commemorating a *National Malaria Day* since 2003, proposed the date for the Americas to be 6 November, which coincides with the day when the presence of malaria parasites in the blood of patients with febrile symptoms was first observed by Charles Louis Alphonse Lavéran in 1880. With these precedents, the 27<sup>th</sup> Pan American Sanitary Conference held in Washington DC from 1–5 October 2007 resolved that **November 6** will henceforth be observed annually as ***Malaria Day in the Americas***. (Full text of CSP27.R11 is available through <http://www.paho.org/english/gov/csp/csp27.r11-e.pdf> )

### II. *Malaria Day in the Americas*: Concept and Objectives

The Regional Strategic Plan for Malaria in the Americas 2006–2010 highlights communications and advocacy as among the key issues in malaria that needed increased emphasis in the Region. As PAHO began the implementation of the strategic plan, the Media Communications, Publications and Advocacy Plan for Malaria in the Americas was developed and consolidated in May 2006. An important element of the plan is the commemoration of *Malaria Day* in the countries of the Americas which campaigns for increased advocacy and commitment among stakeholders and draws communities and the general population into concrete actions that contribute to the achievement of goals and targets in all levels – global, regional, country, and community.

*Malaria Day in the Americas* which will be observed for the first time on **6 November 2007** is envisioned to be the platform upon which countries of the Region can engage in a year-round aggressive campaign against the disease. Specifically, *Malaria Day in the Americas* seeks to:

- Improve the communication process and extension of advocacy work to all stakeholders and target audiences.
- Enhance visibility/interest on Malaria in the Region of Americas and the global scourge that the disease brings to peoples of the world.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the key issues among target audience/population.
- Catalyze change of attitudes and modification of behaviors.
- Generate advocacy/support from the public, policy makers, clients and strategic partners.
- Encourage increased and enduring support to efforts against malaria.

Partners and malaria stakeholders in the Region are encouraged to consider this concept and objectives in the commemoration of *Malaria Day in the Americas*.

**Theme for *Malaria Day in the Americas 2007***  
**Making a difference for the Americas through advocacy and effective partnerships against malaria**

**Slogan**  
**Be part of the solution in the Americas. Join the global fight against malaria.**

### **III. Over-Arching Message**

#### **Malaria is closer to home than you think ...**

- Approximately 1 million cases are reported annually in the Americas.
- 1 out of 3 people is at risk of being infected.
- Malaria transmission occurs in 21 countries in the Region.
- Imported cases are reported in other countries which can cause transmission if not managed appropriately.
- Transmission occurs when a person gets bitten by an *Anopheles* mosquito that carries the malaria parasite.
- Outbreaks and epidemics occur in the presence of the malaria parasite, *Anopheles* mosquito, and conditions favorable for spread of the disease.
- Everyone is vulnerable and pregnant women, children, and persons living with HIV/AIDS are at higher risk.

- In the Americas, travelers, miners, loggers, banana and sugarcane plantation workers, indigenous groups, populations in areas of armed and/or social conflict, & people along areas of common epidemiologic interest / border areas are also susceptible to the disease.
- Approximately 55% to 64% of cases are among people in their most-economically productive years of life.
- Malaria-related illness and deaths constitute a great burden to the economy of the Americas in terms of overall cost.

**Malaria is a preventable and treatable infectious disease and each one can do something concrete and significant ...**

**Spare millions from the scourge of this disease ...**

**Be an advocate and partner: act now in your own home, neighborhood, and community ...**

- Learn about the disease and know if you are at risk.
- Use recommended prevention methods such as long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLNs) if living or travelling to areas at risk.
- Seek prompt and accurate diagnosis from the nearest health post if you think you have the infection.
- Follow the recommended treatment scheme strictly.
- Share this message with your family and friends and support the cause to stop malaria.

#### **IV. Regional and National Events for *Malaria Day in the Americas 2007***

Since the resolution for the commemoration of *Malaria Day in the Americas* was approved less than a month ago, the Region faces a very short period of time to prepare for the its upcoming launching. Nonetheless, at least three events are confirmed to take place for the commemoration on November 6, 2007:

- ***Guyana:*** Week-long activities throughout the country that peaks on Nov. 6 with the theme: **“Strengthening community partnership in the fight against Malaria”**; activities include various exhibits, contests, health promotion activities, discussion forums, recognition ceremonies, and intensive multi-media campaign.
- ***Honduras:*** *Malaria Day* Conference for the scientific societies of Honduras sponsored by the Ministry of Health and PAHO at the Clarion Hotel in Tegucigalpa focusing on the “Malaria Epidemiologic Situation in Central America and Prospects for the Elimination of *P. falciparum*”
- ***Washington, DC:*** Participation in **Combating Malaria: What works?**, a scientific session in the 2007 American Public Health Association Annual Conference; A key presentation in the session is the experience of the Region on malaria in the Amazon basin entitled **“Transcending politics and using evidence-based treatment policies and public health approaches in combating malaria: The Amazon Malaria Initiative (AMI) and the Amazon Network for the Surveillance of Anti-malarial Drug Resistance (RAVREDA) Partnership”**; information materials on

malaria in the Americas will also be distributed in the APHA conference and the PAHO Office in Washington, DC.

Partners and stakeholders in the countries and communities are enjoined to hold similar events/efforts on Nov. 6, 2007 or any time during the year. It is emphasized that while the commemoration is set annually on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, advocacy efforts will be carried out throughout the year.

The Region envisions having stronger and more consolidated set of events for the annual commemoration in 2008. It is hoped that partners and stakeholders in all levels of work will also have increased and stronger participation in planning and commemorating *Malaria Day in the Americas* in the coming years. While a region-wide theme and activities are advocated, countries are encouraged to use the annual commemoration as platform to share a message and engage in activities that directly address national realities and specificities.

**For more information, please contact:**

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