



MALARIA DAY IN THE AMERICAS 2016: Guidelines for Commemoration, Communications, and Advocacy

I. Background

In September 2005, the 46th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) 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 27th 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*. ([CSP27.R11](#))

Currently on its tenth year of commemoration, Malaria Day in the Americas is regarded as an important opportunity and mechanism for countries of the Region to engage various stakeholders in aggressively fighting malaria. In June 2008, the PAHO Executive Committee emphasized the need to build upon the momentum of Malaria Day in the Americas and for peoples of the Region to become strong and involved advocates against the disease.

II. Malaria Day in the Americas: Concept and Objectives

The [Plan of Action for Malaria Elimination 2016-2020](#), approved by the 55th PAHO Directing Council (September 2016), highlights strategic advocacy and communications as among the key issues in malaria that needed increased emphasis in the Region. An important element of these efforts 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.

The Region of the Americas continues to pursue its commitment to global targets including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of the [Global Technical Strategy for Malaria \(GTS\)](#) which envisions a malaria-free world by 2030 and emphasizes that “all countries can accelerate efforts towards elimination through combinations of interventions tailored to local contexts”

Malaria Day in the Americas which will be observed for the tenth time on **6 November 2016**, 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 attain the following objectives:

- 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, including the elimination of local transmission in areas where such is feasible.

Partners and malaria stakeholders in the Region are encouraged to consider this concept and objectives in the commemoration of *Malaria Day in the Americas 2016*.

Theme for Malaria Day in the Americas 2016

“End malaria for good”

Between 2000 and 2015, an expansion of malaria interventions helped reduce malaria incidence by 37% and mortality by 60% globally. During the same period, the Region of the Americas malaria cases and deaths decreased by 67% and 79% respectively.

On the occasion of World Malaria Day 2016, and in keeping with this consolidated effort by the global malaria community to highlight the reported successes and the remaining challenges in malaria control today, the Region is adapting the same theme used for the commemoration of World Malaria Day 2016: **“End malaria for good.”** Stakeholders in the Region have the option of using this theme and energize the commitment to fight malaria.

Key Messages for 2016 (based on key messages for World Malaria Day 2016)

1. Smart investments and strong partnerships have resulted in dramatic progress against malaria in the past 15 years.

- The malaria fight is one of the most inspiring global health stories of our time. Working together, endemic countries, donors, organizations, and communities have reached millions of people with effective tools, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Between 2000 and 2015, 57 countries across the globe reduced malaria cases by at least 75 percent. Now, leaders in Africa, Asia and the Americas have committed to eliminating malaria transmission altogether.
- In the Region of the Americas, malaria cases declined by 67%, and malaria-related deaths decreased by 79% between 2000 and 2014; 18 of the Region’s 21 malaria endemic countries have expressed commitment towards malaria elimination

2. Eliminating malaria is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

- The push to end malaria is saving millions of lives, increasing attendance at school, improving worker productivity and boosting local economies
- Ending malaria will help build a healthier and more secure world

3. We must sustain robust financial investment, political will and innovation to ensure continued success against malaria.

- While it is possible to eliminate malaria with use of current tools, the continued development of new solutions and strategies – including next-generation drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines – is critical if we are to further accelerate gains and mitigate the threat of drug and insecticide resistance.
- Strong regional collaborations that address cross-border malaria transmission and broader health security issues help countries and regions to achieve elimination goals.
- While both international and domestic funding to fight malaria have dramatically increased between 2005 and 2014, continued strong commitments and sustained funding will be needed to end malaria once and for all.
- If we lose focus, we risk losing record gains. Over the last century, there have been dozens of resurgences of malaria in countries around the world, many linked to decreases in funding to fight the disease.
- To achieve the goals of the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030 (GTS), annual funding for malaria will need to triple over the next 15-year period, from US\$ 2.5 billion (current level of spending) to US\$ 8.7 billion by 2030. (WHO, 2016)

4. Eliminating malaria will make the world a better, safer place for future generations and enable millions of people to reach their full potential

- Investment in the malaria fight is one of the best buys in global health, second only to routine immunization. The tools are cost-effective and the return on investment is high.
- Mosquito-borne diseases are a major cause of illnesses and deaths worldwide. Advances in research and tools to fight malaria will help transform how we combat other infectious diseases, like Zika Virus.
- Ending malaria transmission will increase the quality of life of millions of people and free up resources that are currently being used to fight the disease.

III. Key Figures

Globally and in the Americas:

- Effective malaria control and elimination is inextricably linked to the strength of health systems. Strong health systems can deliver effective safe, high-quality interventions when and where they are needed and assure access to reliable health information and effective disease surveillance. At the same time, integrating malaria treatment, prevention and surveillance into existing health programs and activities in endemic countries will ensure that funding earmarked for malaria control and elimination contributes to the development, expansion and continuous improvement of national health systems.
- The international community has recognized the importance of health systems strengthening in combating the major poverty-related diseases in the poorest countries of the world.

Success stories in the Americas, resulting from the implementation of best practices and collaboration include:

- In 2014, the region reported a total of 389,390 confirmed malaria cases and 87 malaria-related deaths. These figures represent a 67% decline in cases and a 79% decline in deaths since 2000.
- Malaria incidence in the Americas declined in 19 of 21 endemic countries between 2000 and 2014.
- Between 2000 and 2014, cases declined over 75% in fourteen countries, 50-75% in two countries, and less than 50% in three countries.
- Currently, 18 of the 21 malaria endemic countries have indicated commitment toward malaria elimination: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Suriname

(Source: Malaria Country Reports, 2014)

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IV. Regional and National Events for Malaria Day in the Americas: Examples from 2007 to 2015

Since 2007, simultaneous activities were held to commemorate Malaria Day in the Americas in various countries such as Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela which include various exhibits, contests, health promotion activities, discussion forums, recognition ceremonies, and intensive multi-media campaign.

During the past nine years, important events were held in Washington DC to commemorate Malaria Day in the Americas. These include:

- (2007) Scientific session entitled “Combating Malaria: What Works?” held during the American Public Health Association Annual Conference where the experience of the Region on malaria in the Amazon was featured and discussed.
- (2008) PAHO coordinated the “Malaria in the Americas Forum: Overcoming the Challenges of a Borderless Disease”, participated in by representatives from various global, regional, and national stakeholders in malaria, focusing on key issues that include climate change and malaria; borders and health diplomacy; and lessons learned and future needs. During the malaria day activities in 2008, PAHO launched the search for the Malaria Champions of the Americas, to identify, celebrate, and provide avenues to emulate best practices and success stories in malaria prevention and control.
- (2009) The awarding ceremony for the Malaria Champions of the Americas is a key event in the commemoration of the 2009 Malaria Day in the Americas at the PAHO headquarters in Washington DC, held alongside the “Malaria in the Americas Forum: Counting Malaria Out towards the 2010 Targets and the UN Millennium Development Goals”. Featured topics in the forum include updates on the status of malaria in the Region; malaria and mobile populations; and lessons learnt during the eradication era and their possible application to malaria elimination in the Americas.
- (2010) Three new Malaria Champions of the Americas were honored during the commemoration of the 2010 Malaria Day in the Americas at the PAHO headquarters in Washington DC. Also held was the Malaria in the Americas Forum that featured the work of the Amazon Malaria Initiative / Amazon Network for the Surveillance of Anti-malarial Drug Resistance (AMI/RAVREDA).

- (2011) Malaria Elimination and the Integration of Malaria Programs in the Health Systems were featured as important evolving strategic directions in the Region during the Malaria Day in the Americas Forum. Outstanding efforts in Honduras, Brazil, and Nicaragua were also honored as Malaria Champions of the Americas during the commemoration of the 2011 Malaria Day in the Americas at the PAHO headquarters in Washington DC.
- (2012) WHO's T3 initiative (Test. Treat. Track.) was focus of technical discussions during the Malaria Day in the Americas Forum, PAHO/WHO encouraged partners, donors and malaria-endemic countries to substantially increase investment in malaria diagnostic testing, treatment and surveillance capacity, coverage and infrastructure. Efforts in Paraguay, Brazil and Ecuador were conferred recognition as Malaria Champions of the Americas 2012 for their outstanding models in the implementation of T3.
- (2013) The Malaria Day forum featured the topic "Defeating Malaria in the Americas: Perspectives on Costs, Current Resources, and Essential Investments" Efforts in Colombia, Brazil and the Dominican Republic were conferred recognition as Malaria Champions of the Americas 2013 for their effective malaria efforts that integrate and provide added value towards addressing other health challenges.
- (2014) The 2014 Malaria in the Americas Forum featured discussions on: "Accelerating Malaria Elimination in the Americas" and highlighted the key role that the Region will play in global malaria elimination efforts. Top honors for the Malaria Champions of the Americas went to the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Guatemala.
- (2015) A Forum of Malaria Networks and Advocates and the regional launch of the Action and Investment to defeat Malaria (AIM) was featured during the regional commemoration of Malaria Day in the Americas. Top honors for the Malaria Champions of the Americas went to Brazil, Paraguay, and Honduras.

The Regional event in Washington DC will be held on November 3rd, 2016 (Thursday). The top finalists for the 2016 Malaria Champions of the Americas Award will be honored in a ceremony that celebrates people and organizations who profoundly contributed to containing this disease that annually afflicts more than half a million people in the region and places the health of millions more are at risk. The 2016 Malaria Day in the Americas regional commemoration will also feature a forum among stakeholders and partners regarding the progress of malaria elimination efforts in the Region.

Partners and stakeholders in the countries and communities are enjoined to hold similar events/efforts on Nov. 6, 2016 or any time during the year. It is emphasized that while the commemoration is set annually on the 6th 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 2016. 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. Partners are enjoined to inform the PAHO Regional Malaria Program of specific activities scheduled in the countries for the 2016 Malaria Day in the Americas so that the information can be disseminated accordingly.

Specific country activities and events for Malaria Day in the Americas 2016 will be announced to the public in advance.

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