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 celebrate the Malaria Day in the Americas on November 6, 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 twelfth 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.

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 twelfth time on 6 November 2018, 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 in the affected population.
• Generate advocacy/support from the public, policy makers, private sector 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 2018.

Theme for Malaria Day in the Americas 2018: Ready to beat malaria"

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 62% and 61% respectively. However, the rise of malaria cases reported in several countries in 2016 and 2017 is a powerful sign suggesting that the work is not over yet and much more needs to be done.

On the occasion of Malaria Day in the Americas 2018, and in keeping with this consolidated effort by the global malaria community to highlight the reported successes and the remaining challenges in malaria today, the Region is adapting the same theme used for the commemoration of World Malaria Day 2018: “Ready to beat malaria.” Stakeholders in the Region have the option of using this theme and energize the commitment to fight malaria.

Key Messages

1. Urgent action is required to get the global fight against malaria back on track
   - On Malaria Day in the Americas 2018, PAHO/WHO is calling for:
     - Expanded coverage of proven tools that we know work – tools that have already dramatically lowered the global burden of malaria.
     - Parallel investments in the research and development of new tools to accelerate the pace of progress.

2. Global progress has stalled.
   - The global response to malaria is at a crossroads. After an unprecedented period of success in malaria control, progress has stalled
   - According to the latest data from WHO, there were an estimated 216 million cases of malaria worldwide in 2016 marking a return to 2012 levels.
   - The current rate of progress is insufficient to achieve critical 2020 targets of the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria

3. In the Americas, the progress has been mixed and uneven.
   - On the one hand, Paraguay has been certified in June 2018 by WHO for elimination of local transmission while Argentina is expected to follow soon. Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, and Suriname were likewise included by WHO in the group of 21 countries worldwide with the potential to eliminate local transmission of malaria by 2020.
Experiences in various countries in recent years also demonstrate that *P. falciparum* transmission can be effectively interrupted.

However, the Region showed an overall increase in cases of 71% between 2015 and 2017, influenced primarily by the continuing epidemic in some countries and specific areas.

4. Malaria cases increase in areas where there is deficient access to prompt malaria diagnosis, treatment, and preventive interventions such as long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLINs).

5. Elimination of local malaria transmission is operationally championed and accomplished at the level of communities by people working on the frontlines. We must act more decisively and locally to impact malaria in areas with the greatest burden.

### III. Key Facts and 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 and opportunities in the Americas, resulting from the implementation of best practices and collaboration include:

- In June 2018, the World Health Organization certified that Paraguay had successfully eliminated malaria. Argentina is expected to follow early next year, and El Salvador had zero malaria cases in 2017.

- Belize, Costa Rica, and Suriname have had less than 100 indigenous cases in 2017 while and Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Suriname have also driven their cases burdens closer to zero and are all included in a list of 21 countries with the potential to eliminate the disease in the next few years.

- Many other countries across the Region are scaling up their efforts to control and eliminate malaria with support from PAHO, USAID, non-profit partners and other global development institutions.
  - In 2015, the Malaria Zero Alliance was launched with the bold goal of eliminating malaria from the island of Hispaniola, which includes Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, partners include the Ministry of Public Health and Population of Haiti, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance of the Dominican Republic, the Pan American Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC
Foundation, The Carter Center, the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

- This year, the Inter-American Development Bank, in collaboration with, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other partners, created a new financing and technical assistance mechanism – the Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative (RMEI) – to help the Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama to scale up effective surveillance, prevention and treatment on the road to elimination by 2022

- Currently, 18 of the 19 malaria endemic countries have indicated commitment toward malaria elimination: Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela

- Of the 15 nonendemic countries which remain receptive and vulnerable to the disease, 10 have been updated regarding their risk and are in the process of reinforcing their capacities

- Since 2009, thirty Malaria Champions of the Americas have been recognized as best practices in the Region: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Suriname.

- This year, Alto Rio Solimões Amazonas, Brazil, Machadinho D’Oeste, Rondonia, Brazil, the Ministry of Health Malaria Program in Suriname and Paraguay’s Programa Nacional del Control del Paludismo are being honored as Malaria Champions for their capacity building effort towards malaria elimination and prevention of re-establishment

IV. Social Media Messages

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<td>#HealthForAll</td>
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Suggested tweets (Maximum: 280 characters)

1. On #MalariaDayAmericas, PAHO calls for urgent action to get the global fight against #malaria back on track. We need to expand access to core malaria-fighting tools to meet the 2030 global health targets. #EndMalaria

2. Global response to #malaria is at a crossroad. After years of successfully tackling the disease, progress has stalled. This #MalariaDayAmericas, let’s do 3 things to get back on
track: political commitment, financial resources, and new & improved tools. #Readytobeatmalaria

3. This #MalariaDayAmericas remind leaders at all levels of the need for greater investments in & expanded coverage of malaria services for all at risk of the disease. #HealthForAll #EndMalaria

4. We need operational innovations and new #malaria fighting tools to #EndMalaria, & stepped-up financing to spur investments in malaria research & innovation #MalariaDayAmericas

5. Universal coverage of proven #malaria prevention tools will improve health & save lives #MalariaDayAmericas #Readytobeatmalaria

6. #MalariaDayAmericas is an opportunity to take stock of progress & call for renewed commitment to fight this centuries-old disease. #ReadyToBeatMalaria

7. National & local leaders in #Brazil, #Paraguay, and #Suriname saved lives and affirmed that municipalities with challenging situations can be on the path to #endmalaria. #ReadyToBeatMalaria

8. Since 2015, #malaria cases among indigenous peoples of Alto Rio Solimões Amazonas decreased by 70% through innovative & culturally sensitive capacity building in malaria diagnosis and treatment. #HealthForAll #MalariaDayAmericas

9. Machadinho D’Oeste - Rondonia, #Brazil reduced malaria cases by 44% between 2016 and 2017 by strengthening integration of malaria surveillance and control actions with Primary Care. #HealthForAll #MalariaDayAmericas

10. The Ministry of Health Malaria Program #Suriname partners with leaders across various levels and stakeholders for capacity building to #EndMalaria #MalariaDayAmericas

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