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 to 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 antecedents, 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 thirteenth 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.

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 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 thirteenth time on 6 November 2019, 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 decision-makers and populations in malaria affected communities, policy makers, private sector, strategic partners, and the general public.
• Encourage increased and enduring support to efforts against malaria, including the elimination of local transmission and prevention of re-establishment.

Partners and malaria stakeholders in the Region are encouraged to consider this concept and objectives in the commemoration of Malaria Day in the Americas 2019.

Theme for Malaria Day in the Americas 2019: “Zero malaria starts with me”

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, since 2015, malaria cases in the Region have increased by approximately 69% suggesting that the work is not over yet and much more needs to be done.

Urgent action is needed to get the global response to malaria back on track – and ownership of the challenge lies in the hands of countries most affected by malaria. On the occasion of Malaria Day in the Americas 2019, 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 2019: “Zero malaria starts with me.” Stakeholders in the Region have the option of using this theme to energize the commitment to fight malaria.

Key Messages / Calls to Action

1. Keep malaria high in the political agenda.
   • On Malaria Day in the Americas 2019, PAHO/WHO is calling for expanded coverage of proven interventions that we know work – Diagnosis, Treatment, Investigation, and Response; and tools such as Long-lasting Insecticide-treated Nets (LLINs) and Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS).

2. Mobilize additional resources.
   • In the Americas, most funding for malaria efforts come from domestic resources. Between 2013 and 2017, over 750 million dollars were invested by national governments or more than two-thirds of total financing for malaria in the Region. However, domestic financing has steadily declined since 2015.
   • Current domestic financing levels are not sufficient to overcome challenges faced in the last mile to malaria elimination.
   • Investments from the Global Fund, USAID, the Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative (RMEI), Malaria Zero and others are crucial additional resources for malaria elimination in the Americas and must be sustained to achieve subnational, national, regional, and global targets.
3. **Empower communities to take ownership of malaria prevention and elimination**

- In the Americas, most cases of malaria are concentrated in just a few municipalities. In 2018, for example, 25 municipalities accounted for more than 50% of all reported cases of malaria in the Region of the Americas. At a country-level, between 25-70% of all cases of malaria are usually concentrated within no more than three municipalities.

- In April 25th, 2019, on the occasion of World Malaria Day, the Region of the Americas responded to the evolving issue of high burden municipalities by launching **Municipalities for Zero Malaria**, an initiative that brings together key partner organizations, relevant government agencies, and municipalities affected by malaria in order to support local efforts to take effective action against the disease.

- Organizations, citizens and local government authorities must be engaged in developing key interventions for malaria elimination at the municipality level if we are to ensure that no one gets left behind.

4. **Be part of the solution; be an advocate for malaria elimination.**

- Learn about the disease and know if you’re at risk

- Use recommended prevention methods such as Long-lasting Insecticide-treated Nets (LLINs) if living or travelling to areas at risk

- Seek prompt and accurate diagnosis from nearest health post or community health worker if you think you have malaria

- Follow the recommended treatment scheme strictly

- Share these messages with your family and friends and support the cause to eliminate malaria

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 achieved the same milestone in May 2019 while El Salvador has reported zero autochthonous malaria cases since 2017.

- Belize, Costa Rica, and Suriname have had less than 100 autochthonous cases in 2018 while Honduras and Mexico have also driven their case burdens closer to zero.

- 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 (PAHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC Foundation, The Carter Center, the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.
  - Since 2018, the Inter-American Development Bank, in collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, PAHO, CHAI, and other partners, has been working in a new financial 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.

- Of the 15 nonendemic countries which are 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-three 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, the municipalities of São Gabriel da Cachoeira - Brazil, La Gomer - Guatemala, and Puerto Lempira - Honduras are being honored as Malaria Champions for exemplifying that malaria can be successfully controlled and subsequently eliminated even in high burden municipalities.
IV. Social Media Messages

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Suggested tweets (Maximum: 280 characters)

1. On #MalariaDayAmericas, PAHO calls to keep malaria high in the political agenda #malaria back on track. We need to expand access to core malaria-fighting tools to meet the 2030 global health targets. #zeromalaria

2. 3 things are needed to move towards malaria elimination: 1 political commitment, 2 financial resources, 3 empowered communities. #zeromalaria #HealthForAll

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 #zeromalaria

4. Be part of the solution to #EndMalaria, & be an advocate for malaria elimination #MalariaDayAmericas #zeromalaria

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

6. #MalariaDayAmericas is an opportunity to learn about the disease and know if you’re at risk. #zeromalaria

7. National & local leaders in #Brazil, #Guatemala, and #Honduras saved lives and affirmed that municipalities with challenging situations can be on the path towards #zeromalaria.

8. La Gomera – Escuintla #Guatemala implemented tailored and problem-based approach towards #zeromalaria #MalariaDayAmericas

9. São Gabriel da Cachoeira – Amazonas, #Brazil, leveraged on key partnerships and Primary Health to effectively reverse the increasing incidence of malaria in complex environments. #HealthForAll #MalariaDayAmericas
10. Puerto Lempira – Gracias a Dios #Honduras reduced their malaria cases by 98% through sustained investments and key interventions after experiencing an outbreak in 2016 #zeromalaria #MalariaDayAmericas

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