**PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH: ELIMINATION OF MALARIA**

## Why is it important?

Malaria is a life threatening disease that affects 250-350 million people across the world causing an annual death toll of 1 million. Malaria parasites[1] are transmitted from human to human through the bites of infected mosquitoes. Malaria disproportionately affects poor people and increases poverty levels in already marginalized communities. According to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF), 58% of malaria deaths occur among the poorest 20 percent population. The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that areas with high-rates of malaria are losing as much as 1.3 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the disease.

In Iran, malaria is the most important disease of which cause (the parasite) is carried by insects. Some 3.8 million people are at risk of infection in South-east Iran.

## What is our goal?

Since the approval of the Malaria National Strategic Plan (NSP) in 2008, the national fight against malaria has gained a great momentum aiming at the elimination of *falciparum*[2] malaria by 2016 and all cases of malaria including *vivax*[3] malaria by 2025.

Particular focus is on people living in high-risk areas including under-5 children, pregnant women, remote rural inhabitants with no access to electricity, border area communities, and Afghan and Pakistani migrants.

## How will we reach it?

In partnership with national institutions and local communities, the project aims to improve data management systems, enhance health education and local participation and strengthen local capacities through: (i) Advocacy campaigns; (ii) Provision of training and capacity development for health sector practitioners at peripheral level; (iii) Provision of malaria diagnostic and preventive supplies; and (iv) Strengthening the infrastructure for malaria detection, prevention and containment including laboratories and reporting systems.

## What have we achieved?

Knowledge and capacity development:

- Development of Malaria Early Warning System and a Malaria Epidemic Preparedness Plan;
- Establishment of 10 Emergency Sites[4] and 54 Rapid Response Teams[5];
- Distribution of 150,000 educational pamphlets and 30,000 posters.
- Providing training to 489 lab technicians,
- Providing training to 3320 individuals (rural malaria mobile teams, teachers and rural community volunteers, seminary students and maternal clinics service providers have been trained for malaria case management using RDT kits, and 966,001 people through community education sessions for Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLIN) use in the target districts.

Protection of people at risk and procurement of health products and equipment

- Provision of 18,000 kg of insecticides for indoor spraying of rural houses to protect 230,000 inhabitants, 2300 insecticide spraying pumps, 575,000 long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets, 265 microscopes and other laboratory equipment;
- Provision of more than 414,000 Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kits[6].

Strengthening local infrastructure and monitoring and evaluation capacity

- Increasing detection capacities by establishment of 30 malaria labs;
- Enhancing health house network services in rural areas by providing 49 4WD vehicles and 610 motorcycles;
- Strengthening capacities of the health system on monitoring and evaluation through recruitment of qualified staff for national and provincial institutions;
- Conducting a Population Based Survey and a Sero-epidemiology Survey in the target areas addressing over 5500 to obtain reliable information on the malaria situation in the target districts.
- In general, the project has contributed to a considerable decrease in the number of local malaria cases from 14,710 in 2006 to 734 cases in 2012;

[1] Parasite: a small animal or plant that lives on or inside another animal or plant and gets its food from it

[2] *falciparum* Plasmodium: *falciparum* is a protozoal parasite carried by the female *Anopheles* mosquito, one of the species of Plasmodium that cause malaria in humans. Malaria caused by this species is the most dangerous form of malaria, with the highest rates of complications and death.

[3] *vivax* Plasmodium: *vivax* is a protozoal parasite carried by the female *Anopheles* mosquito, one of the species of Plasmodium that cause malaria in humans. The most frequent and widely distributed cause of malaria.

[4 and 5] Emergency Sites: Sites with sufficient depot of devices and supplies to be used by trained persons to control and contain malaria outbreaks (which is considered to be an emergency situation) when they happen.

[6] Malaria Rapid Diagnostic kits (RDTs): These are tests which assist in the diagnosis of malaria by detecting evidence of malaria parasites in human blood.