



**World Health  
Organization**

Western Pacific  
Philippines

# Malaria prevention works: Let us close the gap

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Today is April 25. It is the date set by the WHO to commemorate malaria work in the world.

The malaria burden of the world has been declining. The rate of new malaria cases in the world fell by 21% between 2010 and 2015. Malaria death rates fell by 29% in the same 5-year period. But we have a massive unfinished agenda. In 2015 alone, the world had an estimated 212 million new cases of malaria. During the same year, malaria claimed the lives of some 429 000 people worldwide. One child died from malaria every 2 minutes.

Why does malaria continue to take such a heavy toll in endemic countries? This is because many people lack access to the tools that prevent, diagnose and treat the disease. This is particularly true in low-income countries with a high malaria burden. On this day, the WHO is calling on all malaria-affected countries to close the gap in the access to these tools.

Malaria was endemic all over the Philippines and claimed many lives in the country until a few years ago. Through years of effort, the country has made significant achievements. The country has seen continued and marked decline in malaria burden since 2010. There was a 74% reduction in malaria

burden from 2010 to 2014. Progress stalled in 2015, when total reported cases increased to 8,301. But it decreased again to 6,609 in 2016. This was due to an increased number of cases reported from Palawan. This province contributed 90.7% of the national total in 2015 and 92.9% in 2016. Only four municipalities in southern Palawan reported most of the cases.

At least one net of any type covered 92% of households and 92.5% of them were in use in 2015. About 77% of the people slept under a long-lasting insecticidal net the previous night. About 82% of the confirmed malaria cases received treatment according to national policy. Still, many intervention gaps exist.

To close the gaps, Philippines is implementing a national malaria strategy since 2014. The vision of this strategy is of a malaria-free Philippines by 2030. The new draft strategy 2017-2022 aims at reduction of at least 90% of cases and deaths relative to that in 2016. The strategy also aims for the number of malaria free provinces to increase from 34 to 74 at the end of this period. Palawan too has been implementing a strengthened strategy and implementation.

“Philippines has set ambitious but achievable goals for malaria control and elimination. The country will continue to work hard to close the gaps to achieve the goals. The WHO will continue to provide technical support in this”, said Dr Gundo Weiler, the WHO Representative for the Philippines.

“Besides the technical gaps, funding gaps exist as well. The country has allocated more fund for malaria elimination. It has also strengthened program management in collaboration with Local Government Agencies. This will close the financial gap. This will also make the program sustainable even after the Global Fund support ends.”