

# CONGRATULATIONS TO CAMEROON!

## FOR THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE PARLIAMENTARIANS' TASK FORCE FOR THE MALARIA RESOURCES MOBILISATION



On 15 June 2021, the **Parliamentarians' Task Force** was created with the aim of mobilising domestic resources for the fight against malaria in Cameroon. More than thirty parliamentarians (Deputies and Senators from all regions of Cameroon) have committed themselves and have come together around twenty key recommendations to achieve results.

The official launch of the task force was organised in a multi-sectoral partnership: the non-governmental organisation Impact Santé Afrique (ISA), which fights malaria and ensures that the population has access to effective and affordable health care, collaborated with the Réseau des Parlementaires sur les questions de Populations, de Développement et de Santé publique (RPPDS), the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) of the Ministry of Public Health and the World Health Organization (WHO). This event was honourably chaired by the Minister of Public Health H.E. Dr. Malachie MANAOUA.

### Introductory interventions

In his intervention, the Minister of Public Health H.E. Dr. Malachie MANAOUA stated the expectations of the group of parliamentarians, which can be summarised as follows: **advocacy** within parliament to keep malaria a priority and to legislate funds for health promotion. **Working** with other parliamentarians to increase the political will to fund a more ambitious malaria elimination programme; accountability for taking ownership of the fight against malaria in every sector to eliminate it.



**Honourable Pauline NDOUMOU**, President of the Réseau des Parlementaires sur les questions de Populations, de Développement et de Santé publique (RPPDS), in her speech underlined the important burden of malaria in Cameroon, being one of the first causes of mortality. The Honourable recalled the important role of the parliamentarians' task force in mobilizing resources to fight malaria to fund important interventions named in the National Malaria Control Strategic Plan (PSNLP) 2019-2023, such as intermittent preventive treatment in pregnant women and the provision of other effective tools for malaria prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

To this end, she noted, "the network of parliamentarians is an active interface for supporting institutional and other actors in the fight against malaria in particular and in the creation of a task force for the mobilisation of appropriate resources for this fight. Zero malaria, I am committed!

Pregnant women and children under 5 years of age pay the highest price as they account for **70%** of deaths and must therefore be protected. The parliamentarians' wish was that at the end of this working session, concrete actions would be developed to move towards the elimination of malaria.

**Dr Phaniel HABIMANA**, WHO Representative in Cameroon first expressed his satisfaction for this initiative of the parliamentarians who want to play their part in the fight against malaria by committing themselves to progressively increase the national budget allocated to health and to ensure the optimal use of resources. Indeed, he recalled that in 2001, African countries had committed themselves to reducing malaria on the continent and to increasing the budget allocated to health to 15% of their respective national budgets. Unfortunately, malaria is still present in Africa and is even on the rise in some countries. In Cameroon, the national budget allocated to health represents only 5% of public expenditure. Dr. Habimana indicated that Cameroon still has at least 7 million cases of malaria and 11,000 deaths every year; more precisely, 30 people die from this disease every day and the majority of these deaths (**70%**) are among pregnant women and children under 5 years old.



He also hoped that parliamentarians would ensure the ratification of the African Union treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA). This continental effort aims to accelerate the development of medicines and vaccines in Africa in order to better fight the scourge of fake medicines on the African continent.

The WHO Representative also noted the particular role of this Task Force in supporting, encouraging and ensuring that the government mobilises financial resources to increase the domestic health

Dr Dorothy ACHU, Permanent Secretary of the NMCP, recalled the government's desire to eliminate malaria by 2035. With this ambitious goal in mind, the Ministry of Public Health has adopted a National Strategic Plan for Malaria Control ( PSNLP) 2019 - 2023 which defines the high impact interventions. The aim of this strategic plan is to contribute to the improvement of the health of the populations in Cameroon through the reduction of the burden of malaria and its socio-economic burden. The overall objective by 2023 is to reduce malaria-related morbidity by at least 60% compared to 2015.



She thus recalled the need to pursue high-impact interventions in the health districts and the importance of putting in place effective control strategies, in particular: ensuring effective access to quality care for the population, promoting community involvement and participation, and increasing the political will for the concrete mobilisation of additional resources.

### Key points of the presentation of the NMCP

The overall budget set in the NSPMC 2019 - 2023 is 232 billion CFA francs. To date, Cameroon has mobilised 132 billion CFA Francs, leaving a gap of nearly 100 billion CFA Francs to be mobilised during the period 2021 - 2023 for the fight against malaria.

These funds will make it possible to:

- Ensure prevention with free distribution campaigns of Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) in areas not covered;
- Ensure the acquisition of Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) and anti-malarial drugs at all levels including rural areas;
- Strengthen the malaria input supply chain;
- Implement accompanying measures for the proper application of free access measures,
- Improve communication and awareness on malaria;
- Ensure the surveillance system of malaria cases.

Investing in malaria control will not only prevent millions of cases and thousands of deaths each year, but will also ease the pressure on health facilities, support households by reducing the burden of malaria-related expenses, address other health problems, and ensure better returns to school and work.

Following this presentation, a session of exchange and discussion followed.

## VIEWS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

**Honorable Cabral LIBII** stressed that it is important and even crucial to eliminate malaria which is the cause of so many deaths in the communities. On the **management of the community health strategy**, he noted that the Decentralised Territorial Communities (DTCs) must play a greater role by taking charge of the Community Health Workers (CHWs).



On the **mobilisation of funds for the fight against malaria** in the implementation of the PSNLP, **Honourable Engelbert ESSOMBA BENGONO** requested **MINSANTE** to provide solid arguments in order to strengthen the advocacy for the financing of the fight against malaria, and thus fill the financial gap in the implementation of the PSNLP 2019 - 2023



For the **preparation of the debate on the orientation of the budget** at the National Assembly in June 2021, **Senator Elie-Victor ESSOMBA TSOUNGUI**, in his argument raised the importance of increasing funds for the fight against malaria and the mobilization of counterpart funds Global Fund.

Concerning **health financing**, **Dr. Irène YAKAMA**, **Family Health Advisor at WHO**, in her intervention, recommended that Cameroon should make efforts to progressively increase the annual budget allocation for public health from 5% to 15%: "It is recommended at the global level that funding dedicated to health should be 15%. In Cameroon, we are at 5%, so there is 10% that could help save children's lives.



**Honorable NANGA MENANA** insisted on **access to health care and the financing of malaria treatment**, so that free health care is really effective for children under the age of 5.



**Honourable Marie-Rose NGUINI EFFA**, **Chairperson of the Forum of African Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAP)**, said that parliament has the power to legislate bills. Parliamentarians have the capacity and responsibility to promote health. They have a key role to play in health decision-making and a major influence as legislators. They can not only advocate for increased awareness in communities, but also promote a substantial increase in resource mobilisation for health issues in line with the Abuja Declaration.



## Concrete Actions

Impact Santé Afrique (ISA) represented by **Mrs Olivia NGOU**, presented key actions that parliamentarians can take in the fight against malaria. For example, one of their actions could be the recognition of the Community Health Worker by giving him/her an official status recognised by the State and a remuneration.



Mrs NGOU added that parliamentarians can:

- Ensure that the State respects its commitments and mobilises the counterpart funds for programmes supported by external partners in time, which will ensure the implementation of high-impact malaria interventions. **These Global Fund counterpart funds to be mobilised amount to 66 billion CFA francs for the period 2021-2023** for the fight against malaria and will make it possible to ensure the purchase and distribution of long-lasting impregnated mosquito nets to the populations of regions not covered.
- Ensure the continuity of a programme for pregnant women called "health vouchers" to encourage malaria prevention during pregnancy and reduce maternal and infant mortality.
- Ensure the purchase of tools for the diagnosis and effective treatment of simple and severe malaria.

**Honourable Pauline NDOUMOU** to close this debate session, recalled that this working group of parliamentarians is one and the same entity, and the participation of all is necessary in the achievement of the global objective of this Task Force which is to support the achievement of national objectives in favour of the fight against malaria.

At the end of this meeting, the strong recommendations made during the meeting were summarised by **Professor Louis Richard NJOCK**, Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Health. The Parliamentary Task Force was therefore officially launched and is technically supported by the Ministry of Public Health / NMCP, WHO and Impact Santé Afrique (ISA).



More than thirty Members of Parliament present (Deputies and Senators from all regions of Cameroon) were strongly committed to the fight against malaria in order to save lives.

## Some key recommendations

- **Develop an ambitious plan for malaria elimination with the most effective strategies to enable sufficient mobilisation of funds for great impact. Ensure a clear and defined status for the Community Health Worker (CHW)**
- **Ensure the insertion of a malaria line in the health budget to fill the financial gap to ensure the full implementation of the national malaria strategic plan 2019-2023**
- **Support the strengthening of the drug supply system to ensure better availability in health facilities**
- **Advocate for an increase in the national budget allocated to health of 3% in 2022, thus ensuring a progression from 4% to 7% in 2022 and this progressively each year until the target of 15% taken by the African countries in 2001 at the Abuja conference on the fight against malaria is reached**
- **Advocate for an increase in the budget allocated to the Decentralised Territorial Collectivities (DTCs) for health so that they contribute to the care of Community Health Workers (CHWs)**

For all recommendations, please click [here](#)

For more information, please contact Impact Santé Afrique at this email address: [contact@impactsante.org](mailto:contact@impactsante.org)



**We are convinced that with everyone's contribution, we will succeed in taking the fight against malaria to the next level towards its elimination. Together we are stronger!**