

Message from

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WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION
on the occasion of
WORLD MALARIA DAY**

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Malaria-endemic countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region have made significant progress. Malaria cases and deaths in the Region fell by more than 60% between 2000 and 2015, thanks to increased coverage of malaria control interventions. In the same period, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco were certified free from malaria, while Egypt and Oman are preparing for certification of malaria-free status and the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia are progressing towards malaria elimination.

These great achievements have been possible because of the hard work of malaria-endemic countries plus support from WHO, donors and all partners in the Region.

However, progress in reducing the regional malaria burden is now stalling, and there has even been an increase in cases in some countries. Unfortunately, civil unrest and war, unprecedented population movements, insufficient resources, gaps in coverage and the quality of interventions, environmental challenges including climate change, and the presence of invasive vectors are all contributing factors. In the *World Malaria Report 2018*, WHO estimates that we still have more than 4.4 million cases in our Region. With this trend, we will not meet our regional targets. I am particularly concerned about the situation in Djibouti and Yemen, where we need to work with all partners to provide more support to our people and overcome the current challenges.

On the occasion of World Malaria Day, and in line with our vision of Health for All by All and our goal of universal health coverage (UHC), we need urgent action to get our response to malaria back on track and reach our regional targets. Ownership of the collective effort lies in the hands of countries most affected by malaria. Let us join them in saying “Zero malaria starts with me”, to keep malaria high on the political agenda, mobilize additional resources and empower

communities to take ownership of the fight. Together, we can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on ending malaria.