Life-Saving Malaria Medications Donated to the Angolan People

In a widely-covered public ceremony on June 28, Minister of Health, Dr. Luis Sambo, accepted Ambassador Helen LaLime's emergency donation of 500,000 doses of life-saving anti-malarial drugs (Coartem) made possible by the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) through USAID. This emergency donation came in response to drastically higher cases of malaria than any year in recent memory. The donation took place at Hospital Américo Boa Vida, where in recent weeks, as many as 90 children per day were admitted and, horrifically, as many as 30 per day died. The donation of anti-malarial drugs was distributed in health centers in the provinces of Benguela, Cunene, Huambo, Huíla, Kwanza Sul, Malanje, Uige, and to the five major hospitals in Luanda. The visual of Ambassador LaLime and Minister Sambo addressing a point of major national concern received unprecedented media attention. Other donations in the coming months will include 100,000 second-line drugs for the treatment of severe malaria and 500,000 kits of rapid malaria tests. In this year alone, a total of $28 million was invested by U.S. government through PMI in the fight against malaria in Angola. The emergency donation is an additional USAID contribution beyond its regular activities to fight malaria through social mobilization, mosquito net distribution campaigns, health system strengthening, laboratory training, proper management of malaria cases, and supporting the Angolan Central Procurement Agency for Medicines and Medical Supplies (CECOMA) to improve procurement storage and distribution of medicines and health equipment. USAID also supports the Ministry of Health to develop, strengthen and sustain the health systems to control and reduce the spread of HIV/ AIDS and other communicable diseases. To learn more about PMI, please visit www.pmi.gov.
from May 5 to 9, Dr. Bernard Nahlen, USAID Deputy Coordinator of the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), traveled to Angola to help assess an ongoing malaria epidemic in the country, and to provide guidance on potential emergency response by PMI. Accompanied by Ambassador LaLime, Dr. Nahlen's visit included extensive discussions with the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP), as well as site visits to the Ministry of Health's drug distribution warehouse and Luanda's General Hospital. At the hospital, Dr. Nahlen saw adult patients with complicated malaria which is an indicator of a malaria epidemic. PMI is a core component of the President's Global Health Initiative, along with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

Angolan Central Procurement Agency for Medicines and Medical Supplies (CECOMA), developed a draft strategy to reform and strengthen the national pharmaceuticals system. The three-day workshop, offered by USAID's Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Project, was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministries of Finance, Defense, Industry, Commerce and Transport, as well as private sector pharmaceutical companies, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank. Focused on best practices in the areas of forecasting need, cost-effective procurement, on-time delivery and quality oversight, the strategy is seen as key to reforming a system that currently experiences frequent stock-outs of key medicines and supplies, market infiltration of counterfeit, low-quality medicines, and exorbitant prices. Ambassador Helen LaLime and State Secretary for Health, Dr. Constantina Furtado, highlighted at the closing remarks the need to keep health as a national priority even under a time of fiscal severity.
From May 3 to 14, a team of health experts visited Angola to advance USAID’s partnership with Angola's Ministry of Health and other stakeholders to promote USAID’s Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy (HTSP) Project. HTSP project is implemented by Johns Hopkins University enables women to have children at the safest moment for themselves and their infants. USAID will conduct a qualitative study to identify barriers, constraints and misconceptions related to adhesion to HTSP. The results will help the MoH to proceed in a coordinated way with the Ministry of Family and Women Promotion, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Youth to develop well-tailored HTSP programming. HTSP supports the principles and goals of the President’s Global Health Initiative. It aims to accelerate the achievement of Angolan policies to improve contraceptive prevalence and to strengthen family planning as a significant means to reduce maternal and child mortality.

USAID is supporting a 24-month conflict mitigation and management project named Uniting Angola’s Youth for Political Dialogue. The project is being implemented by Search for Common Ground to promote political dialogue among Angolan youth. The project produced and printed 5,000 copies of comic books with five key messages: a) Conflict is inevitable, but violence is not: conflicts can be managed peacefully; b) Even when youth belong to different political parties, what they all want is a better future for Angola; c) Young people have a role to play to ensure peaceful cohabitation within their communities d) Youth can serve as an example for people from all generations when it comes to the development of their communities; e) Even when youth belong to different political parties, they can unite for social and charity purposes. Partnering with Angola’s biggest youth organization, the National Youth Council, the project seeks to reinforce peaceful and positive youth relationships across political and social dividing line in the communities as well as reinforce women leadership among the youth.

On July 14, Acting Mission Director, Paul McDermott, and USAID Senior Infectious Disease Specialist, Dr. Gisele Guimaraes, met with the staff of Core Group Polio Program (CGPP) for an update on progress in polio eradication, including plans for addressing other infectious disease challenges in a post-polio Angola. Since 2006, USAID has contributed approximately $1,000,000 annually in polio funds and works in close partnership with the MOH, WHO and other stakeholders to ensure sustainability of the results achieved in polio eradication in Angola. In 2016, Angola is poised to achieve eradication after five years with no new cases. From 2005 to 2008, Angola was a “re-established transmission of polio” country, but in 2015 attained four years with no transmission. The last case was in July 2011 in Uige Province. At the briefing, the CGPP team presented a draft legacy plan that started in May with technical assistance from WHO to map polio resources.
USAID ran a five-day course titled "Best Practices in Tax Revenue Estimation" and "Best Practices in Effective Cash Management". This course is part of the USAID project Support Public Financial Management (PFM) in Angola with the objective to train GRA employees in best practices in PFM. Through a new peer-based partnership with the Ministry of Finance, USAID supports practical advanced training by experts and practitioners in public finance. Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC) experts, Ms. Phyllis Resnick (Lead Economist, Colorado Futures Center at Colorado State University) and Peter Mills (Lead Public Policy Consultant with Perrin, Thoreau Associates, and revenue projection expert) used a combination of lectures reinforced by practical, hands-on exercises. Both courses trained over 70 GRA officials in effective cash management and tax revenue projections. Another benefit has been the additional one-on-one training and advising sessions with MinFin officials outside the courses.
On June 28, USAID launched a campaign to distribute over 1.1 million insecticide-treated bednets to the people of Huila Province in the joint effort between the PMI and NMCP under the Ministry of Health. The launch garnered positive press in most major news outlets. Bednets are a key driver in reducing malaria deaths. PMI and the NMCP are working together in an effort to achieve full coverage in Angola's eighteen provinces. The Huila campaign is the third province underway this year. Next year, PMI will provide ten million bednets for distribution throughout the remaining fifteen provinces. Distribution of bednets is one of the most visible ways the average Angolan sees U.S. Government assistance working with its government to address one of the most significant health issues in the country. Achieving nationwide bednet coverage by 2017 will not only drive down malaria in the country, but show the United States supports health improvement efforts during Angola's time of fiscal crisis.

USAID General Development Officer, Michael Glees, spent the Fourth of July supporting the distribution of over 6,000 insecticide treated bednets in Catumbela Municipality in Benguela Province. The day's efforts were part of an on-going campaign to saturate the province with this critical vector control tool in the effort to reduce the impact of malaria and other mosquito-borne illnesses. The campaign will provide 1.2 million bednets to Benguela Province and in turn be followed up with similar campaigns with the goal of distributing an additional 7 million bednets in fifteen remaining provinces and achieve 100% nationwide coverage by the end of 2017. The goal of achieving 100% bednet coverage in Angola by 2017, aligns with PMI’s strategy to reduce malaria morbidity and mortality by 40% by 2020.