

Media Update

24 April 2017

WHO

Press Release

World Malaria Day-2017

April 24, 2017: A seminar on World Malaria Day 2017 was organized by the Health Department of FATA in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) in Peshawar Garrison Club on 24-04-2017. The seminar began with the recitation of Holy Quran. It was attended by health professionals from the Health Department, Doctors/Paramedics, WHO Sub Office staff and personnel from Print and Electronic Media.

Dr. Mohammad Assai Ardakani, Acting WHO Representative in Pakistan was the Chief Guest of the event. Dr. Jawad Habib, Director Health Services FATA welcomed the Acting WHO Representative. Director Health Services FATA, appreciated WHO Response for the Provision of medicines to be used for the treatment of Leishmaniasis in FATA.

Dr. Assai, Acting WHO Representative in Pakistan informed that on World Malaria Day, WHO is calling on countries and their development partners to provide universal access to malaria prevention tools for everyone at risk. It is also an occasion to celebrate progress in the Malaria fight and highlight the need for continued investment and political commitment. Since 2000, Malaria prevention has played a pivotal role in reducing cases and deaths, primarily through the scale-up of insecticide treated nets.

Dr Assai spoke on the malaria situation in Pakistan and highlighted that 66 districts are at high risk in Pakistan. In 2016 there was no mortality reported as per the Director Health Services FATA report and the morbidity was 84002 in FATA. FATA and Balochistan are the highest endemic regions in the country, sharing more than 80% of country burden. In 2016, both FATA and Balochistan have seen a rise in annual index as compared to 2015.

He emphasized on effective control of malaria in FATA and Balochistan as this will have a measureable impact on the country's goal to achieve "Elimination by 2030". He opined that the major underlying causes responsible for spreading malaria were poor living conditions, internal conflict, low literacy, population movement and bad environmental situation.

He added that malaria is a preventable and curable disease. Among the 5 parasite species that cause malaria in humans, *P. faciparuum* and *P. vivax* pose the greatest threat to the human kind. The WHO Global Technical Strategy for malaria 2016-30 calls for reduction in malaria case incidence and death rates of at least 40% between 2015 and 2020.

He stressed on following community involvement:

- Pakistan should move towards vector control instead of Malaria Control.
- Detection and elimination of mosquito breeding sources- improving environmental interventions.
- Community awareness and engagement in detection of breeding sites detection of suspected cases, ensure utilization of bed nets and follow up of diagnosed cases.
- Strengthening disease surveillance system.

Shields were presented to the Acting WHO Representative and other staff of the Malaria Control Program FATA.
