

**Report of the Technical Committee Meeting  
for planning and preparation of Regional Parliamentarians Meeting**

**27-28 October 2023, Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu, Nepal**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	3
Inaugural Session.....	4
Business Session.....	6
1. Status on cross-border malaria situation.....	6
2. Discussions on challenges of international cross-border malaria elimination and role of parliamentarians.....	6
3. Engagement of Parliamentarians to support for mobilizing resources ensuring sustainability of programmes.....	11
4. Invite proposals for organizing the upcoming Regional Parliamentarians Meeting.....	13
5. Recommendations.....	13
6. Closing.....	14
Annexure 1: Agenda of meeting.....	15
Annexure 2: List of participants.....	16

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Technical Committee Meeting for planning and preparation of Regional Parliamentarians Meeting was organised on-site and virtually on 27-28 October 2023, in Himalaya hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal. H.E. Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Hon'ble Minister of Health, Nepal graced the occasion with his kind presence as the chief guest. The Senior malaria program officials and Hon'ble Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly from member countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste attended the meeting. Participants from CCMs of Member countries of Bangladesh, Thailand and Timor-Leste, Partners from IAPPD, RTI International, ICIMOD, RBM, Stop TB Partnership and Resource Persons also attended the meeting. (The detailed list of participants is annexed)

Objective and Expected Outcome of the meeting was as follows:

### **Objective**

1. To collaborate with & engage parliamentarians to lead in their respective constituencies disease prevention, preparedness, control and sustainable elimination, including mobilization of resources from domestic and regional sources in cross-border context.

### **Expected Outcome**

1. Establish a Technical Working Group of parliamentarians, with support by SRCMF and partners, as platform for cross-border collaboration, agree on the outline of the work and on roadmap towards the first comprehensive SEA parliamentarians' meeting in the first quarter of 2024.

Parliamentarian welcomed the initiative, liked to have a regional parliamentarian meeting and agreed to take initiative for cross-border disease elimination in their respective constituencies so that international borders don't pose an obstacle to achieving SDG goals and targets by 2030. Therefore, SRCMF will contribute to monitoring of disease control activities in cross-border districts, to seek malaria elimination in international border areas. Meeting proposed to have regular parliamentarians' meetings to monitor progress in international border areas. Meeting directed SRCMF to prepare a resolution for parliamentarians to take forward, suggesting the parliamentarian's role and leadership in their respective constituencies. The meeting recommended SRCMF secretariat to pursue resource mobilisation from SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) for cross-border collaboration, to mitigate cross-border disease transmission and accelerate disease elimination along international borders in SEA Region. Meeting proposed India as venue for the upcoming parliamentarians' meeting in 2024

The meeting concluded at 11:30 AM Nepal time with closing remarks by facilitators.

## INAUGURAL SESSION

The inaugural session started with a welcome address by **Dr. Chuman Lal Das**, Division Chief, Health Coordination, MoH & Population, Govt. of Nepal. He extended a warm welcome to the Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Hon'ble Minister of Health, Nepal, Dr Roshan Pokhrel, Secretary, MoHP, Govt of Nepal, Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly and Senior National Malaria Program officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor Leste, representatives from CCMs of Thailand, Bangladesh and Timor-Lest, Partner from IAPPD, RTI International, ICIMOD, RBM, Stop TB Partnership and Resource Persons for attended the meeting. He welcomed all to the Technical Committee Meeting, for preparation and planning of the upcoming parliamentarians' meeting, organised jointly by MoHP, Govt of Nepal and SRCMF.

He emphasized that malaria knows no borders, and its impact on communities is significant. It is a threat that transcends political boundaries, therefore making regional cooperation and coordination essential in combating this disease effectively. This meeting serves as a platform for experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to come together, share knowledge, and devise comprehensive strategies to strengthen cross-border malaria programs along the borders between India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Parliamentarians, representing the highest legislative authority in the country, play a vital role in leadership in their mandated area towards the development of a concrete plan of action. There is need to explore innovative solutions, exchange insights, and ultimately draft a roadmap that parliamentarians can follow to enact meaningful changes. He thanked SRCMF for giving the MOHP an opportunity to jointly organize this event in Nepal and wished the meeting successful deliberations.

After the welcome address the Meeting was inaugurated by Chief Guest, H.E. Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Hon'ble Minister of Health, Govt of Nepal.

**Dr Jigmi Singay**, Executive Secretary Cum Coordinator of SRCMF, shared the background note of SRCMF. He appraised the meeting of SRCMF establishment on 30 October 2018 by the GF SEA Constituency in the GF Pre-Board meeting held in Yangon, Myanmar, with secretariat in New Delhi, India, because of long international borders shared by India with four countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal. The mandate of SRCMF is coordination and facilitation, resource mobilisation, advocacy and assisting Member Countries attain and sustain programs for 2030 disease elimination goals and targets, focusing on cross-border areas and districts, to begin with. He shared the additional mandate recently given to SRCMF by the GF SEA constituency, to include in its activities, prevention, control and elimination of TB, HIV/AIDS, other vector borne diseases in addition to its ongoing malaria elimination activities, Pandemic Preparedness and Response and One health, including HSS and CSS in cross-border areas and districts.

He shared achievements of SRCMF in establishment of bi-lateral meetings on quarterly basis between India–Bhutan, India–Nepal and India–Bangladesh, Regional Meetings on Bi-annual basis, as well as Local Program level Cross –Border Meetings/Interaction/Visits by the Program. All these meetings have resulted in effective program level coordination between the two countries at the local level through synchronization of joint program planning, as well as joint monitoring and surveillance. He highlighted the need for acceleration of cross-border Malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS programs to achieve 2030 (SDG) goals and targets. He shared the objectives and expected outcome of the meeting and wished the meeting successful deliberations.

### Objective

- To collaborate with & engage parliamentarians to lead their respective constituencies for disease prevention, preparedness, control and sustainable elimination, including mobilization of resources from domestic and regional sources in cross-border context.

### Expected Outcome

- Establish a Technical Working Group of parliamentarians, with support by SRCMF and partners, as platform for cross-border collaboration, agree on the outline of the work and on roadmap towards the first comprehensive SEA parliamentarians' meeting in the first quarter of 2024.

**Mr. Ghulam Rabbani**, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal, India emphasized that Malaria is a life-threatening disease, however it is preventable and curable. Considerable action is needed to combat it. There are cross border challenges but we have to take proactive measures to address the challenges and overcome resource barriers. He added that he will work towards raising awareness in his constituency, so that proactive measures could be taken. He highlighted need for collaboration of neighbouring countries in malaria interventions to reach their full impact.

**Prof. Dr. M Abdul Aziz**, Hon'ble MP and Member-Standing Committee for MOHFW, Govt of Bangladesh, highlighted that the populations in border areas are at risk of malaria and have limited access to health care. There is constant risk of malaria importation due to cross-border movement. He apprised the meeting that cross border collaboration between Bangladesh and India is ongoing with support from SRCMF and requested SRCMF to facilitate establishment of cross border collaboration also between Bangladesh and Myanmar. He underlined the need for designating focal points at cross border districts to start sharing monthly data through WhatsApp, to organise quarterly meetings with adjoining cross border counterparts and to initiate screening at border districts for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria.

**Dr Melanie Renshaw**, Principal Director, ALMA (African Leaders Malaria Alliance), Tanzania reiterated that parliamentarians have a key role in combatting malaria as parliamentarians. They can use their influence and platforms at highest level to support initiatives, make sure cross border bottlenecks are addressed, health systems are strengthened for regional response to climate change, pandemic preparedness and response, and sensitize their constituents to make key decisions regarding policies and resource allocations. She added that with joint action, multi sectoral collaboration, accountability and commitment to leaving no one behind, we can achieve world free of malaria. She underlined the need for resource mobilisation from domestic and private sector sources for fighting regional diseases. She shared examples of cross border collaboration in Africa and underlined the importance of joint advocacy, action, monitoring and data sharing to achieve zero-transmission in border areas and respective malaria elimination targets.

**Dr. Suvanand Sahu**, Deputy Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership Secretariat, Geneva, was happy to see SRCMF convene this important meeting. He added that TB is preventable and treatable, yet people die from TB. This is an unacceptable tragedy. He highlighted the need to address barriers to TB services and stigma and discrimination associated with TB. Bacteria don't respect borders, therefore a coordinated public health mechanism need to be in place to guarantee TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care across borders. He reiterated that while we think about cross border, we need to also think about migration patterns, displaced populations, climate change and its effect of TB transmission, about cross-border movement of highly drug-resistant tuberculosis, health security threats, investment of TB as a pathway to pandemic preparedness and response. He mentioned about Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA) that works towards ensuring the voices of TB-affected communities influence the TB and health agenda, with a particular focus on India, Indonesia, Peru and Cameroon. He underlined the need for strengthening high-level leadership engagement and advocacy to increase investments to end TB. He apprised that the meeting that produced UN High Level Meeting Political Declaration on TB contained a number of global targets, endorsed by Heads of State, who have announced also TB drug price reduction. which is opportunity to make progress in fight against TB. SEA Region accounts for half of global TB burden and heads of both India and Indonesia are leading TB elimination, and he hoped for such leadership in all countries in the region. He looked forward to collaboration with member countries and committed to mobilisation of political leadership in the region.

**Dr Pema Gyamtsho**, Hon'ble Lyonpo, Director General, ICIMOD apprised the meeting that ICIMOD is an intergovernmental institution set up by our eight RMCs (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan, whose governments support ICIMOD and provide them strategic guidance. He highlighted the need to address root causes of diseases through one health approach, which uses interdependent links and integrated approach to optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems, to create new surveillance and disease control methods. All need to work together and break down silos. Political engagement is important as parliamentarians can support initiatives and sensitize their constituencies and help make key policy decisions and their enforcement. He hoped that the meeting will set agenda for parliamentarians' meeting to come up with recommendations for strengthening cross border collaboration.

**Ms. Dil Kumari Rawal Thapa** "Parbati" Hon'ble member of federal parliament, from National Assembly, Nepal underlined the need for cross-border collaboration between stakeholders for elimination of malaria along the India international border. She underlined the need for making primary health care, ranging from promotion, prevention, diagnosis to treatment, accessible to all individuals and delivered as per needs of people in cross-border areas and districts.

**H.E. Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet**, Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister of Health reiterated that malaria is a significant threat for wellbeing of citizens. He acknowledged that cross border collaboration is a critical strategy for the fight against disease, as countries can't afford to work in isolation. He added that parliamentarians hold an important role in policy and in establishment of frameworks for health initiatives. National efforts are needed to sustain and amplify the ongoing cross border collaboration. He urged all countries and stakeholders to share responsibilities and work together to eliminate malaria from the Region. Lastly, he thanked SRCMF for organising this important meeting.

**Dr Roshan Pokhrel**, Secretary, MoHP, Govt of Nepal, in his vote of thanks, extended heartfelt thanks to all participants on behalf the host country, for attending the meeting. He expressed his sincere gratitude to honourable health minister and parliamentarians for gracing the occasion with their esteemed presence. He added that countries in the South East Asia (SEA) Region have committed to reach malaria and TB elimination and control goals by 2030. The South-East Asia Region has second highest estimated malaria burden globally. In this scenario, Nepal is also committed to eliminate the malaria by 2025, but still is facing some challenges and needs to work towards acceleration of malaria elimination activities, especially in cross-border areas, to reach elimination goals and targets.

He highlighted the need for a common strategic framework and operational plan which will include a monitoring and evaluation framework, and a coherent and synchronised prevention and treatment policy, strengthening of disease surveillance systems and exchange of key surveillance data in real time for cross-border responses. He reiterated that collective commitment to the malaria elimination in our Region is needed. He looked forward to continued support, dedication and collaboration in the ongoing fight against malaria. He hoped that the connections made and insights gained here serve as a catalyst for future endeavours in the malaria elimination. He wished the meeting successful deliberations and looked forward to collaboration in the ongoing fight against Malaria.

## **BUSINESS SESSION**

### **1. Status on cross-border malaria situation**

The session on status on cross-border malaria situation was facilitated by Dr. Suriya Wongkongkathap, CCM Chair Thailand, and Co-facilitated by Mr Tobgyel, Program Analyst, VDCP, DOPH, MoH, Bhutan

Following member countries made the presentation on cross-border malaria situation

## **Bhutan**

Mr. Tobgyel, Program Analyst apprised the meeting on vision, mission and target to control, prevent and eliminate malaria, to obtain WHO malaria free certification by 2025

He highlighted importance of cross border collaboration for malaria elimination:

- a) 97% of Bhutan's malaria cases are confined to border areas
- b) Porous land border, large population movement across border (joint villages & towns)
- c) Non-functional cross border collaboration at the ground level
- d) No proper information sharing platform for response

He informed all that both National Programmes have agreed to have 5km radius buffer for cross border interventions and have shared district wise mapping of health facilities on both Bhutan's and India's (Assam and West Bengal) side along the border.

He shared the update on progress of cross border collaboration initiatives with Assam and West Bengal:

- a) Coordination meetings and workshops
- b) Social networking and information sharing
- c) Coordination of control and preventive activities along the border villages
- d) Joint fever screening at border areas

Agreed joint cross border initiatives

- a) Information sharing on the core control measures (LLIN distribution & IRS) and timing
- b) Immediate information sharing of malaria and initiation of case finding simultaneously on both areas
- c) Malaria case treatment, referral and follow up
- d) Joint coordination of IEC and BCC at the border level

New Initiatives

- a) Random screening of the day workers coming in across the border
- b) Initiation of proper case referral, handing and taking over the case across the border
- c) Joint fever surveillance along the border villages

Challenges

- a) Political Commitment: Competing priorities, advocacy, leadership
- b) Technical advisory supports: Technical capacity building (WHO & APMEN, RBM and other agencies.
- c) Continued financial support:
  - o GF /WHO/GoI and other donor agencies
  - o Increase in domestic funding
  - o Financial support – CRUCIAL
- d) Border Malaria: detected cases to be confined to border areas, need further strengthening
- e) Commitment and ownership at implementation level, including in the community

## **Bangladesh**

Dr. A. K. Azad shared targeted phased elimination milestones and targets and malaria situation in Bangladesh from 2013-2023 up to September. Among the 8 administrative divisions of Bangladesh, 6 divisions share borders with India and Myanmar, spanning to cover 4,300 Kms. All 13 malaria endemic districts are bordering with India and Myanmar

He shared list of cross-border 12 districts and 36 Upazilas and points of entry/exit in Bangladesh with India.

He appraised the meeting on the outcomes of the Indo-Bangladesh cross border meeting in Agartala, Tripura, India on 6 February 2023:

- a) Pilot districts identified for cross border collaboration:
  - Bangladesh: Khagrachari (Ramghar, Panchari, Matiranga and Dighinala upazillas) and Netrakona (Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazillas)
  - India: Sabrum/Magrum, Amarpur, Dhalai and South Garo Hills
- b) Focal points for the respective districts and upazilas identified (Civil Surgeons and UH&FPOs)
- c) Agreed joint activities:
  - WhatsApp group of focal points
  - Sharing monthly data (template to be prepared)
  - Quarterly meeting with participation of all levels of officials
  - Simultaneous screenings at border villages
  - Vector interventions
  - Next meeting proposed: 9 May 2023 (virtual)

Way forward:

- a) Take initiatives to implement decisions taken during the last cross border meeting held in Agartala, Tripura on 6 February 2023 between Bangladesh and India
- b) Explore possibility for cross border collaboration between Bangladesh and Myanmar

## **Indonesia**

Dr. Hellen Dewi Prameswari NMCP, MoH shared status of cross-border collaboration, surveillance and response.

Actions:

- a) Strengthened migration surveillance and responses
- b) Proactively engaging country's neighbours to improve collaboration on malaria control and elimination
  - Cross-border collaboration has been initiated between MoH of Indonesia and MoH of Timor-Leste
  - MoU between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea

Challenges:

- a) Large traffic activity of population to/from endemic area from/to non-endemic area, internal /external importation of cases
- b) Present cross border countries: Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Philippines

She apprised the meeting on global malaria situation and highlighted the following:

- a) Indonesia has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest caseload after India in Asia with estimation of positive malaria cases 811.636 (WHO, 2022).
- b) Indonesia contributes 2% of the global cases and is one of 9 endemic countries in south East Asia.

She presented the objectives and strategies of National Malaria Program, specific interventions and roadmap. As per endemicity map (July 2023) high malaria endemic districts are scattered in following 4 provinces:

- a) Papua
- b) West Papua
- c) NTT (Sumba Island)
- d) East Kalimantan (PPU)



She apprised the meeting of MOU, signed by both Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia and Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on Health Cooperation, virtually on 4 February 2022. Joint Action Plan 2024 and Integrated Malaria Program Services 2024 are being developed.

Proposed cross-border activities:

- a) Regular meetings at district level
- b) Capacity building at border areas
- c) Cross notification through migration surveillance
- d) Follow up of treatment on both sides
- e) Monitoring for Artemisin and insecticide resistance
- f) Synchronizing the management of the use of insecticide
- g) Data sharing mechanism
- h) Joint epidemiological investigation
- i) EIC in local language and sociocultural context

## Nepal

Dr Gokarna Dahal apprised the meeting of malaria status at federal, provincial and local level and Malaria Status at National Level, 2019-2023. In 2023, from January to 7 September, 343 imported cases and 6 indigenous cases were reported.

Imported malaria cases in bordering districts in 2021-2022

Year	Total Malaria Cases	Total Imported Malaria Cases	Total Imported Malaria Cases in bordering districts	% of Imported
2021	391	359	270	75%
2022	508	476	343	72%

Imported Malaria Cases from India in 2022

- a) Total Imported cases- 476
- b) Imported cases from India- 415
- c) Percentage of imported from India-87%
- d) Total imported cases from Maharashtra -227, Gujrat -109 and UP- 15

He added that, of 6731 RDT Malaria tested, 12 cases were detected at Indo-Nepal Border Points of Entry (POE) during period 19 March 2021 to 1 Aug. 2023

Progress on Malaria Elimination

- a) Nepal is one of the E-2025 countries with indigenous cases less than 50 in previous 2 years
- b) To attain the elimination milestones, GoN is revising the National Malaria Strategic Plan with focus on Prevention of Re-establishment (PoR), strengthening surveillance (1-3-7) and strengthening cross-border collaboration
- c) Government priorities for elimination:
  - o Implementing malaria free initiatives at sub-national level
  - o Accelerating targeted interventions for migrant workers
  - o Engaging FCHVs for community-based malaria activities.

Progress on malaria elimination cross-border collaboration:

- a) Recently, Indo-Nepal bilateral cross-border meeting was conducted in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, 12-14 September 2023, in the presence of adjoining bordering districts of both counterparts.

- b) There has been a common real time information sharing through WhatsApp, but it needs to be strengthened.
- c) With support of SRCMF, two cross-border meetings were organized at the local level, especially with adjoining international cross-border counterparts from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, India.
- d) Sensitization and sharing of cross-border issues was done and commitment sought, now agreed joint activities need to be implemented at local level.

### **Timor-Leste**

Delegate from Timor Leste shared progress towards cross-border collaboration on malaria with Indonesia:

- a) The MoU has been extended and signed by both Ministers for Health.
- b) A coordination meeting with both countries was held in July 2022 in the MoH Jakarta and NTT Health Services. Both countries presented the implementation of the action plan agreed in 2019 and the pathway to malaria elimination.
- c) Both countries agreed to eliminate malaria on Timor borders.
- d) Integrated malaria screening and exchange of information on three GF-funded diseases in the NTT District (Oepoli, Napan and Wini), Citrana, Oesilo, Pasabe and Sakato were implemented recently from August – to September 2023
- e) Cross-border technical meetings held which involved high-level local authorities (Governor, Parliament member, NTT, Deputy President of Oecusse), local leaders and relevant multi-sector representatives from both countries
- f) Recommendation was made and will be followed by the signing of the commitment next month

### **Challenges to Be Addressed:**

- a) Lack of routine communication and regular exchange of information on malaria and elimination/prevention interventions.
- b) Inadequate mechanism for timely notification and reporting on unusual/outbreak situations.
- c) Absence of an Inter-Country Task Force and the nominated focal points at border districts.
- d) The malaria problems and needs assessments are not uniform to be able to identify constraints and gaps encountered in the border areas of both countries.
- e) Non-systematic assessment of the degree of receptivity and vulnerability, and of mapping of populations at risk in the border areas
- f) Advocacy action to eliminate/prevent malaria in West Timor/Timor-Leste is largely missing in the border areas of both countries.

### **Strategic Components:**

- a) To strengthen cross-border cooperation and collaboration focusing on:
  - Agreeing on Strategic Framework 2023-2027 and Joint Action Plan 2023
  - Establishing an Inter-Country Task Force
  - Nominating national and border focal points.
  - Setting up inter-country reporting mechanisms:
    - to exchange regularly information based on standard/agreeable formats/forms.
    - to report timely on unusual/outbreak malaria situations in the border areas of participating countries.
- b) To enhance programme capacity focusing on:
  - Conducting in-service trainings for different categories of malaria programme and health staff depending upon local needs arising in border areas.
  - Supporting exchange visits, study tours and joint trainings on malaria
- c) To improve disease management, surveillance and prevention practices in border areas focusing:

- Conducting the countries' problems/needs assessment.
  - Carrying out regular assessment(s) of the levels of receptivity and vulnerability to update risk-stratification and map vulnerable populations as well.
  - Upgrading national capacities on malaria surveillance to maintain high standards of health staff' competences and skills when malaria is getting less common in both countries.
  - Identifying and forecasting outbreak-prone areas/ situations to boost emergency preparedness.
- d) To enhance community capacity building focusing on:
- Producing and disseminating targeted/local IEC and advocacy materials related to malaria elimination and prevention.
  - Raising public awareness on malaria prevention.

#### Target Locations and Intended Beneficiaries:

- a) Assistance is to be provided to border areas in Timor-Leste and West Timor/NTT/Indonesia focusing on:
- 24 village clusters with 82 378 people living within the 2-5 km. border stretch of Covalima and Bobonaro municipalities, and the entire Oecusse region, is considered as a high-risk area. 60% of the whole population of the above municipalities is to be targeted in Timor Leste.
  - 18 sub-districts of Kupang, Belu, Malaka and TTU districts situated in West Timor, with 64 056 people residing in 50 village clusters within the 2-5 km. stretch along the international border with Timor-Leste.

#### Implementation Arrangements:

- The proposed framework will be implemented by the respective MoHs/NMPs in close collaboration with all partners concerned
- The proposed action will have a synergistic impact with other national programs and international projects implemented in the field of malaria in border areas of both countries.
- Establish an Inter-Country Task Force for directing and overseeing the implementation of inter-country and country/border activities
- National and border focal points will be designated to establish/improve communication, coordination and collaboration at the central and district levels of both countries.

#### Monitoring & Evaluation:

- a) Comprehensive M&E for reviewing the progress and impact of the planned activities and identifying the required areas of action to enhance performance and effectiveness by the Task Force at regular intervals.
- b) M&E will be based on the participation of all stakeholders.

#### Successful interruption of indigenous malaria transmission in the Naktuka border community of Oecusse:

- Local authorities (from the deputy president and the secretaries of health, agriculture, administration, and Tourism) took leadership and of interventions and community engagement
- Management of the breeding sources by community and local leaders
- Religious leaders carried out natural protection to prevent Malaria at each point of entry in Naktuka
- Community engagement for travellers with a travel history to be tested for malaria through the PSF/malaria volunteers.

- PSFs carry out Active Case Detection in border areas
- No case since September 2020

## **2. Discussions on challenges of international cross-border malaria elimination and role of parliamentarians**

The session was facilitated by Facilitator Dr. Rajiv Tandon and Co-facilitator: Dr Rudra Marasini

Group presentations

Group 1: Bhutan (National Malaria Program and MP from Bhutan)

Role of Parliamentarians on malaria elimination:

- a) Policy scrutiny and prioritization
- b) Advocacy and awareness on malaria elimination among the parliamentarians
- c) Any policy guidance on disease elimination on cross border collaboration
- d) Resource mobilization especially from domestic funding
- e) Support health workers' capacity development and competency building
- f) Bring HR Shortage issues in the Parliament for discussion
- g) Institute malaria elimination awareness during the constituency visit
- h) Facilitate and support on policy change to improve cross border information sharing
- i) Advocate Concept of One Health approach

Group 2: India (MLAs from Meghalaya, India) Bangladesh (National Malaria Program and MP from Bangladesh)

Role of Parliamentarians on malaria elimination:

- a) Involve ministry, health professionals and people they represent and sensitize them on risks and preventive measures
- b) Horizontal and vertical coordination meetings among elected representatives (MPs and MLAs)
- c) Forum of parliamentarians/standing committee
- d) Lobby for coherent policy actions at national level
- e) Communicate with elected representatives from border constituencies in, standing committees etc)
- f) Establish Digital platform WhatsApp group with support from SRCMF
- g) Coordinate with multiple stakeholders, ministries and border guards etc.
- h) Lobby for allocation of resource budgets
- i) One Health and intersectoral coordination for better link with human and animal health
- j) Advocacy for border management and border huts for health screening and testing.

Group 3: Nepal ((National Malaria Program and MPs from Nepal))

Roles of Parliamentarians for Malaria elimination:

- a) Point of Origin:
  - Influencing role for Community mobilization and community engagement at the vulnerable places.
  - Advocacy with the local authorities especially local, provincial and federal governments
- b) Point of transit
  - Advocacy role for strengthening Health desk at the ground crossing points of entry (HR, Infrastructure, multi sectoral coordination with stake holder's other than health, including security, customs and CBOs)
- c) Point of destination:
  - Advocacy for policies to coordinate and collaborate with neighboring counterparts to cover the health security of the migrant population.

- d) Crosscutting issues: Advocacy for effective border management (security, business and seasonal migrant regulation policy)
  - Advocacy for funding and logistic support for the cross-border disease transmission and control.
  - Advocacy regarding the health institution mapping, information sharing mechanism and related policies at ground crossing border at national and subnational levels.
  - Monitoring and supervision of existing laws and policies
  - Establishment of G-to-G coordination mechanism by raising the issue in parliament and parliamentary committee

### 3. **Engagement of Parliamentarians to support for mobilizing resources particularly domestic and regional funding ensuring sustainability of programs.**

Session as facilitated by Mr. Manmohan Sharma and co-facilitated by Hon'ble M.P. Dasho Dago Tsheringla.

After deliberation following agreements were reached:

- a) Elected representatives need to have clear and open discussions with communities to know their needs and to address their issues
- b) Political engagement to build awareness in combatting malaria, and to enhance exploration and arrangement for funds for sustainability of the ongoing cross border activities for malaria elimination
- c) Member countries unanimously authorized SRCMF secretariate to approach SAARC Secretariate and ICIMOD for resource mobilization support

### 4. **Invite proposals for organizing the upcoming Regional Parliamentarians Meeting based on the above three session recommendations**

Session was facilitated by Dr. Jigmi Singay and Co-facilitator by Dr. Chuman Lal Das

After deliberation followed agreements were reached:

- a) Cross border malaria elimination is a shared responsibility for all neighboring countries
- b) Neighbouring countries need to engage with each other to address challenges for cross border collaboration in order to achieve zero-transmission in border areas.
- c) Active engagement, real-time data collection and sharing, robust surveillance systems and collaboration and co-operation at all levels of government is needed to ensure no one is left behind
- d) Countries need to identify hotspots of imported cases and build capacity of health service providers with regards to their roles and responsibilities
- e) Elimination of malaria will not be achieved until we destroy the disease-carrying vectors in the region.
- f) For preventing cross-border infection transmission, robust surveillance and prompt treatment is needed to prevent outbreak
- g) Antimalarial drug resistance needs to be monitored to protect the efficacy of malaria treatment.
- h) Parliament plays an important role in making cross border malaria elimination priority through sensitisation and mobilisation of communities, in advocating for cross border joint activities and mobilising resources to sustain ongoing malaria elimination activities.
- i) Member countries proposed India as venue for upcoming parliamentarians meeting

### 5. **Recommendations of the Meeting**

The Meeting deliberated on each agenda item and made the following recommendations:

- a) Parliamentarians welcomed the initiative and liked to have a regional parliamentarian meeting for cross-border districts, and agreed to take initiative for cross-border disease elimination in

their respective constituencies, so that international borders don't pose an obstacle to achieving SDG goals and targets by 2030.

- b) SRCMF to monitor first cross-border districts to seek malaria elimination in international border areas, in agreement with member states.
- c) Meeting proposed to have regular parliamentarians' meetings, facilitated by SRCMF, to review progress on international borders.
- d) Meeting directed SRCMF to prepare a draft resolution, for discussion and decisions by parliamentarians, to take forward the parliamentarians' role and leadership in their respective constituencies, specifying different operational roles for MPs and MLAs in the implementation
- e) SRCMF secretariat to pursue fund mobilisation from SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) for cross-border collaboration to mitigate cross-border disease transmission and acceleration of disease elimination along international borders in SEA Region.
- f) Invite parliamentarians from bordering district, local level and endemic zone areas along with federal level in the upcoming parliamentarians' meeting, in full agreement with governments.
- g) Involve and encourage health ministers /prime ministers, policy makers and law enforcement authorities to get support from highest body for impact and get results at ground level to address the broad policy and implementation issues, including potential use of resources at their disposal, which will then lead to more detailed planning and programming by the responsible program managers, such as:
  - o Address challenges and strengthening of surveillance activities for rapid identification of any importation or reintroduction of malaria.
  - o Initiate border PoE screening on Indian side similar to Bhutan and Nepal, to lessen the risks of transmission of the disease from imported cases.
  - o Government to government communication to address data sharing policy restrictions, collaboration and co-operation at all levels of government to ensure no one is left behind
  - o Establishing mechanism for constant tracking to identify hotspots of imported cases, conduct institutional mapping and build capacity of government and local health service providers with regards to their roles and responsibilities
  - o Identification and elimination of foci of infections
  - o Monitor antimalarial drug resistance to protect the efficacy of malaria treatment.
  - o Advocate for One Health collaborative, multi-sectoral, trans-disciplinary approach to achieve optimal health outcomes by recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and the environment to improve malaria elimination programme
  - o Explore IHR framework for application to cross border malaria and other vector-borne diseases to strengthen surveillance and response.
  - o Advocate for political, policy, funding, community motivation and sensitisation, and system strengthening for sustaining ongoing cross border disease elimination activities.
- h) Member countries proposed India as venue for upcoming parliamentarians meeting, SRCMF to consult with India and finalize the venue.

## **CLOSING**

In the closing session the Dr Jigmi thanked all the esteemed participants for good discussions, active participation, valuable contributions and way forward. He formally closed the meeting at 11:30 AM Nepal time

## Agenda

## Annexure 1

Time (NPT)	Day 1: Friday 27 October '23	Responsible person(s)
9:30-10:00	Registration	SRCMF
<b>Inaugural Session</b>		<b>Chair: Dr Roshan Pokhrel</b>
10:00-10:05	Welcome address by Division Chief, Health Coordination, MoH & Population, Govt. of Nepal	Dr. Chuman Lal Das
<b>10:05-10:10</b>	<b>Inauguration of the meeting by Chief Guest Hon'ble Minister of Health, Nepal</b>	
10:10-10:15	Address by Executive Secretary Cum Coordinator SRCMF Secretariat	Dr Jigmi Singay
10:15-10:20	Address by Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal, India	Mr. Ghulam Rabbani
10:20-10:25	Address by Hon'ble MP and Member-Standing Committee for MOHFW, Govt of Bangladesh	Prof. Dr. M Abdul Aziz
10:25-10:30	Address by Principal Director, ALMA ( <i>African Leaders Malaria Alliance</i> ), Tanzania	Dr Melanie Renshaw
10:30-10:35	Address by Director General Health Services, MoHP, Govt of Nepal	Dr. Sangeeta Mishra
10:35-10:40	Address by Deputy Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership Secretariate, Geneva	Dr. Suvanand Sahu
10:40-10:45	Address by Hon'ble Lyonpo, Director General, ICIMOD	Dr Pema Gyamtsho
10:45-10:50	Address by Hon'ble Member of Federal Parliament, Nepal	Ms Dil Kumari Rawal Thapa
10:50-10:55	Address by Chief Guest Hon'ble Minister of Health, Nepal	H.E. Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet
10:55-11:00	Vote of thanks by Secretary, MoHP, Govt of Nepal	Dr Roshan Pokhrel
11:00-11:30	Group photograph followed by coffee/tea break	
<b>Business Session</b>		
11:30-12:40	<b>SESSION 1: Status on cross-border malaria situation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussions</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitator:</b> Dr. Suriya Wongkongkathep <b>Co-facilitator:</b> Mr. Tobgay  <b>Speakers:</b> National Malaria Programmes from: Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Indonesia
12:40-01:40	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
01:40-02:45	<b>SESSION 2: Discussions on challenges of international cross-border malaria elimination and role of parliamentarians</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Group work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ National Malaria Programmes (NMPs), M.P.s and MLAs</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Group work Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Facilitator:</b> Dr. Rajiv Tandon <b>Co-facilitator:</b> Dr Rudra Marasini  Group 1: India-Bhutan (NMPs, MPs, MLAs) Group 2: India-Bangladesh (NMP, MPs, MLAs) Group 3: India-Nepal (NMPs, MPs, MLAs)
02:45-04:00	<b>SESSION 3: Plenary: Engagement of Parliamentarians to support for mobilizing resources particularly domestic and regional funding ensuring sustainability of programmes.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussions</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitator:</b> Dr Manmohan Sharma <b>Co-facilitator:</b> Hon'ble M.P. Dasho Dago Tsheringla  <b>Speakers:</b> MPs, MLAs and Partners
04:00	<b>End of Day 1</b>	
<b>Time (NPT)</b>	<b>Day 2: Saturday 28 October'23</b>	

Time (NPT)	Day 1: Friday 27 October '23	Responsible person(s)
09:00-11:30	<b>SESSION 4: Plenary: Invite proposals for organizing the upcoming Regional Parliamentarians Meeting based on the above three session recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussions</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitator:</b> Dr. Jigmi Singay <b>Co-facilitator:</b> Dr. Chuman Lal Das  <b>Proposals/Comments from:</b> MPs, MLAs, NMPs, Partners, Resource Persons
<b>Closing</b>		
11:30-12:00	<b>Closing</b>	Chair Dr Jigmi Singay

## Annexure 2

### List of participants

SL	Name	Designation	Organization	Country	Email Address
<b>Hon'ble Minister</b>					
1	H.E. Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet	Hon'ble Minister of Health	Govt of Nepal	Nepal	
<b>GF SEA Constituency</b>					
<b>Eminent people from parliaments of member countries</b>					
2	Prof. Dr. M Abdul Aziz	Hon'ble MP and Member-Standing Committee for MOHFW		Bangladesh	draaziz2011@gmail.com
3	Dasho Dago Tsheringla	Honourable Member of Parliament, the Deputy Chairperson	National Council of Bhutan	Bhutan	<a href="mailto:tsheringlad@gmail.com">tsheringlad@gmail.com</a>
4	Mr. Ghulam Rabbani	Hon'ble Cabinet Minister, Department of Environment,	Government of West Bengal		
5	Mr Pradyut Bordoloi	Hon'ble MP	Newgong, Assam	India	pradyut.bordoloi@sansad.nic.in, tipamputra@gmail.com
6	Dr. Rajdeep Roy	Hon'ble MP	Assam	India	royrajdeep@rediffmail.com
7	Mr Jakir Hussain Sikdar	Hon'ble MLA	Assam	India	mlasarukhetri@gmail.com
8	Dr Celestine Lyngdoh	Hon'ble MLA	Meghalaya	India	drbomcelestine@gmail.com
9	Mr Gabriel Wahlang	Hon'ble MLA	Meghalaya	India	walgavi1@gmail.com
10	Dr Santanu Sen	Hon'ble MP	West Benga	India	
11	Mr Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha	Hon'ble MLA	Silchar, West Bengal	India	mailatkdp615@gmail.com
12	Ms. Dil Kumari Rawal Thapa "Parbati"	Hon'ble member of federal parliament	National Assembly	Nepal	
13	Mr. Chhabilal Bishwokarma	Hon'ble member of federal parliament	House of representative	Nepal	
14	Distinguish Ms. Maria Gorumali Barreto, and	President	Commission F of the National Parliament dealing with social and health	Timor-Leste	
15	Mr. Luis Ximenes Caldeira "D1"	Vice President	Commission F of the National Parliament dealing with social and health	Timor-Leste	
<b>Officials from National programs</b>					
16	Dr. Md. Abul Kalam Azad	Deputy Director, M&PDC and Program Manager, Malaria,	CDC, DGHS	Bangladesh	dr.azad842492@gmail.com
17	Mr Tobgyel	Program Analyst, Vector Borne Disease Control Program	DoPH	Bhutan	tobgye@health.gov.bt, rwtobgyel@yahoo.com



18	Dr Choeda Gyeltshen	Medical Superintendent CRRH, Gelephu	National Medical Services	Bhutan	cgyaltshen609@gmail.com
19	Dr Roshan Pokhrel	Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population	Govt of Nepal	Nepal	roshanpokhrel107@gmail.com
20	Dr. Chuman Lal Das	Division Chief, Health Coordination Division	MoH & Population, Govt. of Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal	Nepal	drchuman@gmail.com
21	Dr Rudra Marasini	Director	Epidemiology and disease control division (EDCD)	Nepal	drmarasinirp@gmail.com
22	Dr. Gokarna Dahal	Section Chief, NTDs/VBDs	EDCD	Nepal	<a href="mailto:dahalgokarna7@gmail.com">dahalgokarna7@gmail.com</a>
23	Dr.Champa Aluthweera.	Director. Director of Anti Malaria Campaign	MoH, Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	<a href="mailto:champaaluthweera@gmail.com">champaaluthweera@gmail.com</a>
24	Dr Helen Dewi		MoH Indonesia	Indonesia	
25	Maria Do Rosario de Fatima Mota,	Malaria Program	MoH	Timor-Leste	
26	Ms. Madalena Fernande Melo Costa		Ministry of Health Division of Global Fund Administrator of Global Fund Division	Timor-Leste	
<b>CCM Bangladesh</b>					
27	Mohammad Harun-Or-Rasid	Deputy Coordinator, BCCM	ICCM Bangladesh		dc.bccm@gmail.com
<b>Partners</b>					
28	Shri Manmohan Sharma	Executive Secretary	IAPPD	India	iappd2012@gmail.com
29	Dr. Rajiv Tandon	Director – Health	RTI International	India	rtandon@rti.org
30	Dr Pema Gyamtsho	Director General	ICIMOD		Pema.Gyamtsho@icimod.org
31	Dr. Melanie Renshaw	Donor	RBM/UNOPS		melanie@alma2030.org
32	Dr.Suvanand Sahu	Deputy Executive Director	Stop TB Partnership Secretariate, Geneva		sahus@stoptb.org
<b>Resource Persons</b>					
33	Dr. Suriya Wongkongkathep	CCM Chair	CCM Secretariat Thailand	Thailand	suriya@health.moph.go.th,
34	Dr. Olavi Elo	Resource Person	SRCMF	Geneva	olavi.elo@gmail.com
35	Dr Ferdinand Laihad	Resource Person	SRCMF	Indonesia	fjlaihad1@gmail.com
36	Mr. Filipe da Costa	Member & CCM-TL Chairperson	Executive Director of the Unit for Combating Stunting.	Timor-Leste	dcfilipe@yahoo.com
<b>SRCMF Secretariate</b>					
37	Dr. Jigmi Singay	Executive Secretary	SRCMF	Bhutan	jigmi2118@gmail.com
38	Dr Dipanjan Sujit Roy		SRCMF	India	doc.pune@gmail.com
39	Ms Natasha Dawa	Program Officer	SRCMF	India	dawanatasha@gmail.com
40	Ms Tshering Dem	Finance Officer	SRCMF	Bhutan	tshering.dem@gmail.com
41	Dr. Nishikant Bele	Information Technologist	SRCMF	India	nr_bele@yahoo.com