Advocacy for a Malaria Observatory in Congo-Brazzaville

By : Michel ODIKA

Now more than ever, the point is to promote a better understanding of malaria impact at household, community and national levels and propose actions tailored to specific conditions. In other words, African countries need a united action on a global scale. Only then can success be in sight. That, in the final analysis, is the chief reason why I spend time on providing my native country with a Malaria Observatory. As distinguished from conventional approaches, a Malaria Observatory enables to take full advantage of the resources (with special emphasis on resource-constrained settings) required to make significant progress on key fronts - e.g. environmental safety and sustainability...

Published on
Booksie

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Facing the factsâ ¦

Michel ODIKA

Building a critical mass of capacity for coordinated action across sectors[1]. Due to its damaging impact on communities and societies, malaria still ranks among the greatest development and security issues facing Congo-Brazzaville (my native country, Central Africa). A challenge of this magnitude demands better governance and further leadership. Consequently, the way to address malaria must be transformed from an episodic and crisis-management approach to a thoughtful and long-term response that places greater emphasis on evidence-based strategiesâ ¦

Toolkit for assessing and building capacities for high quality responses to malaria. Overall, governance is the management, distribution and redistribution of available resources. As distinguished from governance, leadership predominantly refers to a strong sense of preparedness for what lies ahead. Despite forward motion, the governance and leadership necessary to control malaria is not yet evident in Congo-Brazzaville. One of the greatest paradoxes is that, although health authorities know with increasing accuracy what disaster awaits if the response to malaria continues to be inadequate, they still fail to strengthen that response in ways that will save lives and dollars (Francs CFA in Congo-Brazzaville).

Expanding the multisectoral response to malaria. On the whole, malaria proceeds from a complex web of interrelated factors. What people consider desirable ways of living as individuals and what they expect for their societies constitute key parameters for addressing a disease whose determinants predominantly operate at environmental and institutional levels[2]. Therefore, an observatory specifically focused on malaria could reflect the increasing value given to cross-agency work and evidence-based policy-making. Unlike conventional institutions, it could also bring together various constituencies â e.g. health authorities, research centers, university institutes, civil society organizations â around a shared agenda.

Observatory: bold political initiative to scale up and sustain the response to malaria. Now more than ever in Congo-Brazzaville, the matter is to place the response to malaria at the center of national development processes. Mobilizing the resources and efforts, overcoming barriers to multisectoral strategies and implementing agreed plans require robust governance and appropriate leadership on a global scale. That in itself would be enough to advocate for aâ ¦Malaria Observatory.

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[1]. Michel ODIKA, Malaria Observatory (Slide presentation).

[2]. Michel ODIKA, Regards croisÃ©s sur le paludisme (La Libre Belgique, copyright 2010).

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