Introduction

At this stage of the season moderate to high rains are falling over most of Southern Africa and are expected to continue up to mid March. Temperatures and humidity are rising creating optimal conditions for malaria vector breeding and transmission in most of the sub-region with exception of southwest part of the subcontinent. National Malaria Control Programs (NMCPs) in the sub-region are busy implementing malaria prevention and control activities.

Malaria data presented in this bulletin reflect only data from national passive case detection surveillance and information systems. Therefore, when reading these figures, issues of coverage and access to health care must be taken into consideration. Rainfall estimates presented in this bulletin are available from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) Africa Data Dissemination Service.

Increased Malaria Epidemics Risk in all Southern African Countries

Typically summer rainy season over much of the Southern Africa spans from October to March and coincides high incidence malaria season. The largest amount of precipitation is observed between December and March time where malaria transmission reaches its peak and epidemics are more likely to occur. Most of the region is expected to be fairly wet with normal to above normal rainfalls.

Heavy rains are falling in most parts of Southern Africa and localized floods were reported in Angola, Malawi, Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Taking into consideration the dry spells of the last three years in most of the sub-continent risk of malaria epidemics are high in most of malaria epidemic prone countries.

Malaria epidemics and incidence increase can be expected during the months of April and May. There is an increased relative risk of malaria epidemics in Botswana, Namibia and highlands of Madagascar, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the aftermath of the current rains.

Countries are encouraged to review their level of preparedness by holding one-day preparedness meetings and ensure that enough commodities to face malaria incidence increase and epidemics are available. Malaria emergency response teams should be ready for quick response when need arises. Malaria epidemics surveillance activities should be strengthened during this time of the season by ensuring timeliness and completeness of the weekly data.

Though improved forecast tools are available for regional long range prediction of malaria incidence and epidemics, there is inadequate information on distribution of malaria risk factors and occurrence within countries and across the sub-region. In addition there is lack of updated information on malaria control and prevention activities coverage in most countries in the sub-region.

Review of malaria and malaria epidemic case definitions and use thresholds for epidemics detection are highly recommended. Vigilance of the proxies like incidence of severe and life threatening malaria, malaria slides positivity rate, drugs and blood consumption, in conjunction with environmental and climate conditions conducive to increase of malaria incidence and occurrence of epidemics, improve our capacity to detect and respond timely to malaria outbreaks when they occur.

More details about malaria risk factors can be found by clicking the link below, which is a product made available by IRI as one of the recommendations out of the MALOF workshop held in Harare in November 2005. It gives a regional perspective of malaria epidemics risk factors as well as the situation country by country around 12 months period in a very interactive form.

http://iridl.ldeo.columbia.edu/maproom/Health/Regional/Africa/

Heavy Rains Recorded in Most Parts of Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Countries

During the month of November, 2005, the Southern Africa Inter-Country Malaria Control Programme organised the Malaria Outlook Forum (MALOF-2) to strengthen the malaria epidemics preparedness and response in South Africa for the 2005 – 2006 malaria season. With support from meteorological specialists from the Southern Africa Development Community Drought Monitoring Centre (DMC), International Research Institute for Climate Prediction (IRI) and the World
Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the meeting used climate variables, vulnerability factors and malaria control information to forecast 2005 - 2006 malaria season. This exercise provided evidence-based information to be used by NMCPs in their malaria planning cycle and to set priorities in terms of preparedness and response for malaria seasonal increase and epidemics.

**Zone VII: Mauritian.** There is a high probability of normal to below-normal rainfall. Parts of Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe have received more than average amounts of rainfall this season. For more information on the rainfall situation see the maps of rainfall estimates and variations below.

**Regional Malaria Situation Update**

Malaria cases in parts of the region are on the increase and outbreaks were reported in South Africa. The outbreaks were reported in Limpopo province from the last weeks of December 2005 and were brought under control by the second week of January 2006. These outbreaks were mainly concentrated in northeast Vhembe and Eastern Mopani bordering Matabeleland South province of Zimbabwe. High Case Fatality Rates were recorded at health facilities and were associated with late presentation at Health Facilities. During the festive season higher than normal malaria cases were reported in Gauteng province and Mpumalanga province on the north eastern part of South Africa. Most of the cases reported in Gauteng are imported malaria cases of returning residents coming from malarious areas.

Very few malaria cases and deaths were reported in Botswana and Swaziland and the two countries have been reporting decreasing number of malaria cases for the past four years. Only 10 malaria deaths were reported in Botswana for the year 2004. Apart from the high cases and deaths reported during the outbreaks at the end of the year, South Africa has been reporting low malaria cases throughout the year with a consistent decrease in the number of cases and deaths in the past 4 years.

There is no significant difference in the number of malaria cases reported in Zimbabwe compared to the number of cases reported in previous malaria seasons. However lower malaria deaths were reported compared to malaria deaths reported in previous malaria seasons. Malaria data for the second half of 2005 from the central highlands of Madagascar shows a decrease in the number of malaria cases reported.

There is no significant difference in the number of malaria cases and deaths reported in Mozambique compared to the number of cases reported corresponding period in previous malaria seasons. However in the southern-most part of Mozambique there has been a significant decrease in the reported malaria cases and deaths. This is in the area which forms part of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI) involving Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa.

There has been a slight increase in the number of malaria cases reported from Zambia in 2004. However there has been a consistent steady decrease in the number of malaria deaths reported in the same period. In Malawi there is no significant change in the number of malaria cases reported compared to corresponding periods in previous malaria seasons. No epidemics have been reported during the current malaria season. Below are malaria trends of this season for countries in Southern Africa.

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**Rainfall Forecast (January – March 2006)**

Normal to above normal rainfall in most part of the Southern Africa region was forecasted for the current rain season.

**Zone I:** Extreme northwestern of Angola and northern half DRC. There is a high probability of below-normal to normal rainfall.

**Zone II:** Northern Tanzania. There is a high probability of below-normal to normal rainfall.

**Zone III:** Most of Angola, southern DRC, Zambia, southern Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, and most of South Africa. There is a high probability of normal to above-normal rainfall.

**Zone IV:** Southwest South Africa. There is a high probability of below-normal to normal rainfall.

**Zone V:** Most of Madagascar. There is a high probability of normal to above-normal rainfall.

**Zone VI:** Southern Madagascar. There is a high probability of normal to below-normal rainfall.
Rainfall Estimates

21 – 31 January 2006

01 – 10 February 2006

11 – 20 February 2006

21 – 31 December 2005

01 – 10 January 2006

11 – 20 January 2006
Rainfall Anomalies and Epidemic Risk Maps

21 – 31 January 2006
1 – 10 February 2006
11 – 20 February 2006
1 – 10 December 2005
1 – 10 January 2006
11 – 20 January 2006
21 – 31 November 2005
1 – 10 December 2005
11 – 20 December 2005

United Against Malaria – Together We Can Beat Malaria
3. Country Malaria Trends

3.1 Botswana

Clinical Malaria Cases in Botswana

Malaria Deaths in Botswana

3.2 Madagascar

Malaria Cases in the Highlands of Madagascar

3.3 Malawi

Malaria Cases in Malawi

United Against Malaria – Together We Can Beat Malaria
3.4 Mozambique

3.5 Namibia
3.6 South Africa

Malaria Cases in South Africa

Malaria Deaths in South Africa

3.7 Swaziland

Malaria Cases in Swaziland
3.8 Zambia

3.9 Zimbabwe
## 4. Southern Africa NMCP and WHO Surveillance Focal Persons

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>National Malaria Control Programme Surveillance Contact Persons</th>
<th>WHO Surveillance Contact</th>
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<tbody>
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