

GLOBAL FIGHT ON MALARIA STALLED: WHO

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Mosquito menace: Fogging in progress to control mosquitoes in Chennai, in this file photo . | Photo Credit: [K Pichumani](#)

The World Health Organisation on Monday said global efforts to fight malaria have hit a plateau as it reported there were more cases of the killer disease in 2017 than the previous year.

The latest WHO report showed that the number of malaria cases climbed to 219 million last year, two million higher than 2016, while international funding has declined.

“The world faces a new reality,” WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, warned as the UN agency launched the new report.

“As progress stagnates, we are at risk of squandering years of toil, investment and success in reducing the number of people suffering from the disease,” the WHO chief said.

Malaria, which is spread to people through the bites of infected female mosquitoes, occurs in 91 countries but about 90% of the cases and deaths are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Foreign funding to some of the most affected countries has declined, in certain instances by more than 20 percent for every individual at risk of contracting the disease.

“A considerable proportion of people at risk of infection are not being protected, including pregnant women and children in Africa,” the WHO chief said.

The disease killed 4,35,000 people last year, the majority of them children under five in Africa.

Another constraint in fighting malaria has been mosquitoes building up resistance to some insecticides, it said.

WHO said it was embarking on new ways to scale up the battle against one of the world's deadliest diseases.

The plan includes country-led projects to “jumpstart aggressive” control efforts, said Kesete Admasu, who heads Roll Back Malaria, a global partnership initiative to curb the parasitic disease.

Mozambique is one of the target countries.

“Business as usual is no longer an option,” said Mr. Admasu.

Most malaria cases reported last year were in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, India, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda.

Five countries accounted for nearly half of the cases: Nigeria (25 percent), DR Congo (11 percent), Mozambique (five percent), and India and Uganda with four percent each.

However countries such as Ethiopia, India, Pakistan and Rwanda recorded “substantial” declines in malaria cases.

Every year, November 12 is observed as World Pneumonia Day to raise awareness and to advocate for global action to protect against, help prevent, and

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