

**Remarks by WHO Representative at the
Opening Session of the
National Annual Conference**

21 March 2013

- His Excellency, Dr Mam Bunheng
- Minister, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Cambodia,
- Dr Char Meng Chuor, Director of CNM
- Directors of Provincial Health Departments
- All development partners and distinguished guests
- Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good Morning!

On behalf of WHO, it is a great honor for me to address this National Annual Conference, hosted by the National Center for Parasitology Entomology and Malaria Control (CNM), the Ministry of Health, the Royal Government of Cambodia. WHO recognizes the importance of organizing this

Conference as it will review and.../

conference as it will review and evaluate the previous year's achievements, identify the challenges in terms of organizational performance, and plan for the coming year. I am very pleased that malaria-endemic Operational District staff as well as many partners are participating in this meeting to share experiences on the control of malaria and other vector borne and parasitic diseases.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
You will recall that in 2011 HE Prime Minister Hun Sen called for the elimination of malaria in Cambodia. The National Malaria Programme subsequently developed the Malaria Elimination Strategy. Short and medium term goals have been set to move towards pre-elimination of malaria across Cambodia with special efforts to contain artemisinin resistant P.Falciparum malaria by 2015.

The next target is towards elimination.../

The next target is towards elimination of P.Falciparum malaria and ensure zero deaths from malaria by 2020. The ultimate goal is to eliminate all forms of malaria, including P. Vivax, completely by 2025.

It is important to emphasise that, unless we pay adequate attention to the delivery of services, including good surveillance, in remote areas and targeting mobile populations, elimination of resistant malaria parasites will remain out of reach.

I would like to thank HE Minister Mam Bun Heng for his strong commitment to the National Malaria Program. I also would like to acknowledge the many partners that support Cambodia's Malaria program. With this commitment and support the future of malaria control in Cambodia is bright.

In 2012 the joint (external and internal).../

In 2012 the joint (external and internal) malaria program review was conducted and assessed major achievements, documented best practices and lessons learnt, identified critical challenges and proposed appropriate solutions. Recently the recommendations of this Malaria Program Review were discussed in a dissemination workshop to inform decisions on program re-design in order to achieve better performance in malaria control. Special attention was given to issues of access, equity, coverage, quality and impact. The Program Review recommendations thus contribute to the “Implementation Frame work” for the national malaria control strategy.

While significant progress has been made in malaria control in Cambodia, the national malaria program is facing a continuing challenge of emerging malaria drug resistance in especially in border areas with Thailand.

Failing to contain and control this.../

Failing to contain and control this resistance will have serious implications for Cambodia, and should be considered a regional and potentially even a global emergency.

In 2008, WHO in collaboration with CNM and stakeholders responded to the malaria drug resistance challenge by organized a series of workshops/ meetings, which then led in 2009 to the start of the Malaria Containment Project with funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. From 2010 onwards, the Malaria Containment work has become a part of the Cambodia Global Fund Round 9 (SSF) grant, with the implementation led by the National Malaria Program.

Recently, WHO received funding from the BMGF and the Government of Australia to coordinate the implementation of the

“Emergency Response to Artemisinin.../

“Emergency Response to Artemisinin Resistance” in the six Greater Mekong Sub-region countries: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. This new 3-year programme that will be implemented in close collaboration with the national malaria programmes in the six Mekong countries underlines the urgency to address artemisinin resistance and aims to contribute to a strong Mekong Sub-Regional response.

In spite all the problems and challenges that I just mentioned, it is important to acknowledge the overall success in reduction of malaria over the past decade, and more especially the significant reduction in reported deaths from malaria. These achievements occurred because the basics of malaria control are applied with good public health practice, emphasising early diagnosis and treatment of malaria.

Let me now share with some words.../

Let me now share with some words about Dengue. In Cambodia Dengue continues to be a real public health threat. The disease disproportionately affects children, and caused 42,000 clinical cases in 2012, a significant increase compared to previous 4 years data. Fortunately, the case fatality rate remained relatively low.

If we want to effectively address the Dengue problem, we must take preventive action, such as clearing the mosquito breeding sites around the houses, application of abate, Bti and larvivorous fish. Early diagnosis and appropriate hospital management of dengue cases is essential. In the absence of an effective vaccine, Dengue control is challenging. WHO is fully committed to support surveillance and control efforts in Cambodia and the Region. We encourage the health partners and donors to lend their support as well.

The awareness generated in the in.../

The awareness generated in the community should be translated into action. Increased partnerships, effective resource mobilization, health system strengthening and political will are necessary to ensure better Dengue control in the country.

I would like to conclude with some remarks on the control of neglected tropical diseases. Following strong Government commitment and support from international partners and donors the prevalence of lymphatic filariasis dropped so low that mass drug administration has been stopped. The situation is now observed carefully awaiting to declare elimination.

The National de-worming programme has already achieved the WHO goal of regularly treating at least 75% of all school aged children at risk of morbidity from soil-Transmitted Helminths.

In 2012 the schistosomiasis program.../

In 2012 the schistosomiasis program review was conducted and this disease is also well on the way to elimination. To sustain these achievements, it is necessary to advocate a multi-intervention approach integrating more and more neglected tropical diseases into the public health services. With partners support CNM is currently successfully implementing the Integrated National Plan of Action 2012-2015 to Control Neglected Tropical Diseases in Cambodia.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you every success with this conference. I trust that your discussions during the conference will enable you to reach consensus on operational priorities for 2013 and future activities to be implemented.

I thank you for your attention