



THE LIBERIA RMNCH SCORECARD

Background

A Call to Action

Liberia has made impressive progress in reducing both child and maternal mortality. By 2012, the country had achieved its MDG 4 target of 83 under-five deaths per 1,000 births. The 2013 under-five mortality rate is estimated at 75 deaths per 1,000 births. While the MDG 5 target of a Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of 300 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births may not be achieved there has been a substantial reduction in the maternal mortality realized. As Liberia rebuilds its health system after the recent widespread Ebola outbreak and shifts focus from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mechanisms to track maternal and child health outcomes will be crucial.

The Response

Liberia introduced a Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Child Health (RMNCH) Management Tool as an accountability mechanism designed to enhance transparency and action on priority RMNCH interventions in October 2013 and has updated and used it on a quarterly basis to guide management and decision making.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare convened a one-week exercise to identify opportunities to strengthen the impact of Liberia's RMNCH management tool, from 9-13 June 2014. The exercise was supported by the African Leaders' Malaria Alliance (ALMA), a forum of African heads of state and government, and key development partners including WHO, UNICEF, USAID. Interviews were conducted with the Deputy and Assistant Ministers, the Directors of Planning, Family Health, County Services and HMIS, Co-ordinators for Capability Building and Family Health, and relevant Development Partners. In addition, five counties were visited including selected health facilities (Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, River Gee, Maryland, and Nimba) and Community Health Directors and Officers in these locations were interviewed.

Progress

The Ministry of health has regularly updated the scorecard throughout the Ebola outbreak

and the scorecard documented the resulting decline in access to health facilities and significant reductions in coverage of essential health interventions. The scorecard was used to highlight the seriousness of the situation and supported fund raising efforts globally.

Strengths of the Liberia RMNCH Scorecard

- Liberia's RMNCH management tool is well integrated into existing management routines, and is being used to target action in the identified areas of need. All stakeholders, including the Deputy and Assistant Ministers and key Development Partners highlighted the process for quarterly review of the scorecard in joint technical meetings. There is clear responsibility for populating the tool.
- The RMNCH management tool has catalyzed action including enhanced resource allocations and technical support from both the Ministry of Health and partners to underperforming counties to carry out bottleneck analysis and support enhanced effort to address areas of underperformance.
- Additionally, the principles of the RMNCH management tool link well with existing accountability tools such as Performance Based Financing, including mechanisms at community level to hold service providers accountable.

Following a review of the RMNCH scorecard by the Reproductive Health Technical Committee, a multi-partner task-force visited counties in the South-East of the country and supported a bottleneck analysis to identify reasons for underperformance of key interventions. As a result of the task force visit, additional resources and capacity building were provided to enhance performance with reports of resulting improvements.

Future actions

The Ministry of Health committed to the following actions:

- The development of a Health sector scorecard, covering targets aligned with Liberia's 10 year development plan and the World Health Assembly proposed post-2015 Health targets
- The expansion of the Performance Based Financing scorecard and accountability mechanism to all counties country wide, building on the existing mechanism in PBF counties and integrating experiences from the RMNCH scorecard

- The Introduction of Wave 2 indicators following the finalisation of the new HMIS indicators
- Inclusion of the scorecard and action item tracking in the agenda for quarterly meetings with partners and dissemination of the scorecard and action tracking tool prior to these meetings

Conclusion

The SDGs will require consistent focus on accountability and results at all levels. The Liberia RMNCH scorecard provides a strong foundation for Liberia to build on as it transitions from the MDGs to the SDGs and as it rebuilds and recovers from the Ebola outbreak.