

Country Disease Outlook

Congo

August 2023



World Health Organization

African Region

Background

The Republic of Congo is a country in central Africa. It is bordered by Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and by the Angolan exclave of Cabinda.

It is a lower middle-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 2,2448 (2022) and a population of 5.9million (2022).

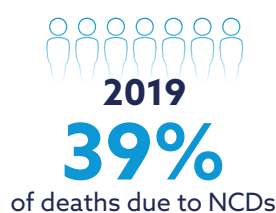
Key points

- ◇ Congo has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 39% of deaths in 2019.
- ◇ Congo slightly improved its child survival rates between 2015 and 2021, however it is not yet meeting the SDG targets for neonatal or under-five mortality rates. Congo had 29,487 people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021 and has not yet met the 95-95-95 goals for HIV.
- ◇ Congo is endemic for four of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA). In 2020, 80% of the 17.7 million people targeted were reached with MDA.
- ◇ Congo's vaccination coverage rates are not yet meeting the 90% target for vaccination in children, reaching only 77% with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and 68% with the first dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2021. While strengthening the routine immunization system to reach new cohorts sustainably, Congo should also consider the implementation of appropriate catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these cohorts of children from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks in the future.

UHC/CN

Universal Health Coverage/Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases
WHO Regional Office for Africa





Broad disease outlook

The country has a high burden of both communicable (such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) and non-communicable disease (NCDs). The latter was estimated to have caused 39% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria remains a public health problem in Congo with an estimated 1.3 million cases in 2021 (with incidence rate of 219.3 cases per 1,000), resulting in 2,293 deaths. Congo's malaria incidence rate has been fairly steady since 2015 and the country is off track to meet the targets set by the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

In 2021, incidence of tuberculosis for Congo was 370 cases per 100,000 people. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) has increased since 2015, going from 53 to 54 per 100,000 population in 2021. In contrast, the TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has fallen from 54 to 45 in the same period.

Congo has met none of the 95-95-95 goals:

- ▲ 35% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 89% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ There is limited data on the number of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 28,055 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

Congo was endemic for four of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis, and trachoma. In 2020, 14.1 million of the 17.7 million targeted (80%) were reached with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*), yaws, Buruli ulcer, taeniasis and cysticercosis, leprosy and rabies.

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in Congo. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was high at 777 per 100,000 in males and 656 in females in 2021.

Congo has implemented initial efforts on the NCD progress indicators related to NCD policy and plan, tobacco taxes, tobacco smoke free/pollution and tobacco advertising bans, however progress has been more limited on the remaining NCD progress indicators, specifically those relating to tobacco media campaigns, alcohol advertising restrictions, salt policies, trans fats policies, marketing to children and physical activity guidelines.

Childhood Immunization

Congo's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically not been at the 90% target levels. In 2021, the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine was 77%, while the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose was 68%.

In 2021, there were an estimated 40,085 under-immunised children and 44,992 zero-dose children. While strengthening the routine immunization system to reach new cohorts sustainably, Congo should consider the implementation of appropriate catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these cohorts of children from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks in the future.

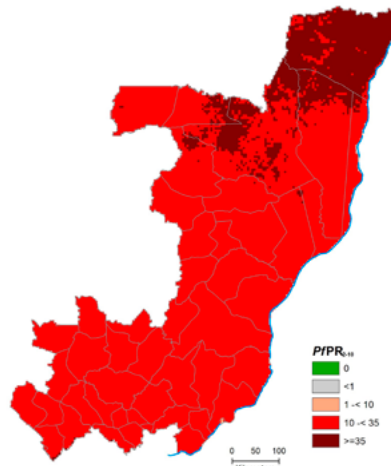
Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 53 to 43 per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2021, although it is still above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate decreased from 21 to 18 per 1,000 live births in the same period, remaining above the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

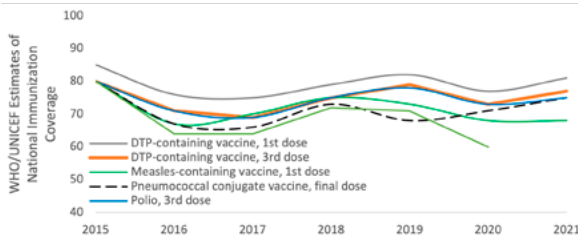
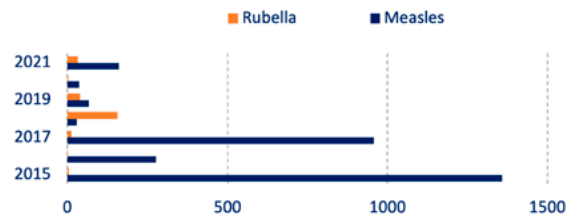
POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
5.8 million people	1.3 million	2,293

ITN use in children under five years 31.5% and 9.6% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick

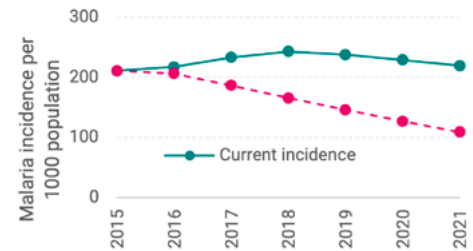


Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in Congo in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Malaria incidence in Congo since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is not on track for GTS targets



Zero dose children 33,114 Under-immunized 40,085

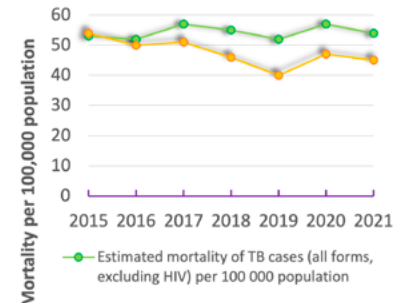
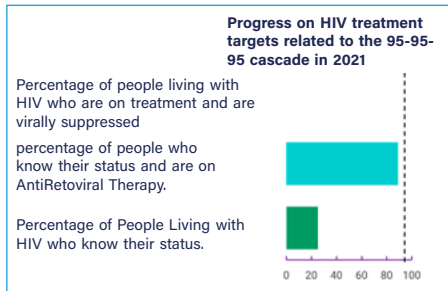
WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage remains <80% for most antigens and there was some recovery in 2021.

Measles and rubella cases occurred in last few years although fewer compared to 2017 outbreak

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 29,487** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 45%** TB cases
- 4%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

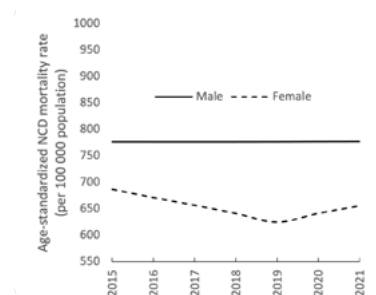
73% Domestic funding for TB
>50% Domestic funding for HIV



- Indicator 1 - Targets
- Indicator 2 - CRV Mortality
- Indicator 3 - Surveys
- Indicator 4 - NCD policy and Plan
- Indicator 5A - Tobacco taxes
- Indicator 5B - Tobacco smoke free/polution
- Indicator 5C - Tobacco health warning
- Indicator 5D - Tobacco advertising ban
- Indicator 5E - Tobacco media campaign
- Indicator 6A - Alcohol availability
- Indicator 6B - Alcohol advertising restrictions
- Indicator 6C - Alcohol taxes
- Indicator 7A - Salt policies

NCD PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Achieved**
- Partially achieved**
- Not achieved/Unknown**



NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Endemic NTDS requiring Preventive Chemotherapy (PC)

- Lymphatic filariasis
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Schistosomiasis
- Trachoma
- Onchocerciasis (non-endemic)

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
17.7 Million targeted for MDA
14.1 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDS

- Leishmaniasis (Cutaneous and visceral)
- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*)
- Leprosy
- Rabies