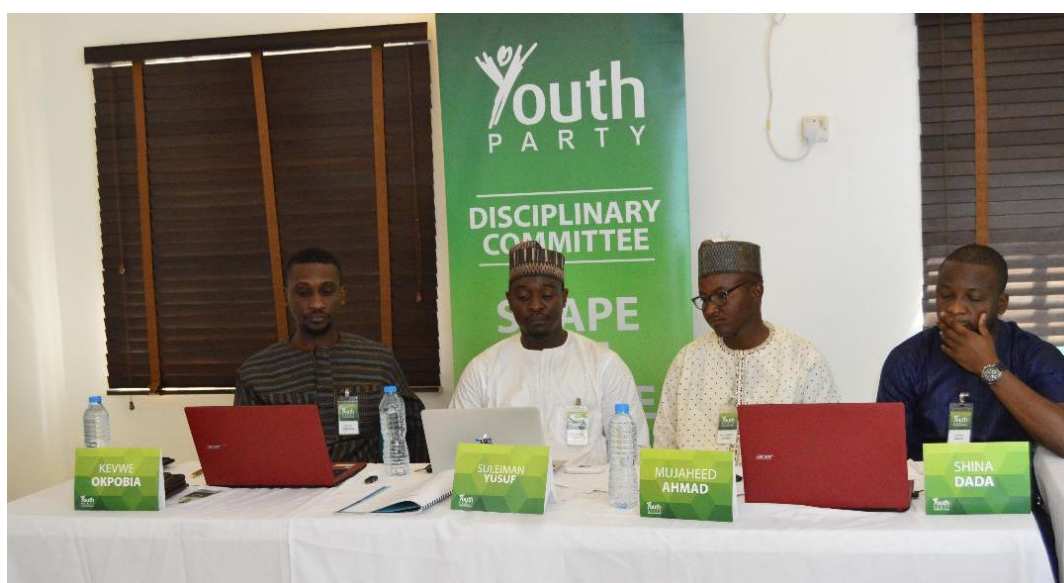




National Chair, Mr. Chukwudi Adiukwu (middle); (L-R) Ex-Officio Member, Mr. Ogala Osoka; National Organising Secretary, Mr. Segun Adeniyi; President Student Chapter, Mr. Bolaji Ogalu; and National Legal Adviser, Mr. Kevwe Okpobia, at the 3rd National Working Committee Meeting.



(L-R): National Legal Adviser, Mr. Kevwe Okpobia; Deputy National Chair, Mr. Suleiman Yusuf; National Secretary, Mr. Majaheed Ahmad; and Deputy National Auditor, Mr. Shina Dada at a disciplinary proceeding.



(L-R) National Legal Adviser, Mr. Kevwe Okpobia; President Student Chapter, Mr. Bolaji Ogalu; and National Publicity Secretary, Ms. Ilamosi Ekenimoh at the 3rd National Working Committee Meeting.



(L-R) Ex-Officio Member, Mr. Ogala Osoka and National Legal Adviser, Mr. Kevwe Okpobia at the 3rd National Working Committee Meeting.



(L-R) National Chair, Mr. Chukwudi Adiukwu and National Organising Secretary, Mr. Segun Adeniyi at the 3rd National Working Committee Meeting.



(L-R): Deputy National Secretary, Mr. Amadu Ayiba Sunday; National Auditor, Dr. Umar Muhammad; and Ex-Officio Member 1, Mr. Sope Durodola at the 2nd National Working Committee Meeting.



National Chair, Mr. Chukwudi Adiukwu at the 3rd National Working Committee Meeting.



## Malaria Elimination in Nigeria: A reality or a myth?

By Dr. Ify Aniebo, PhD, MRes, MSc, MPH

I attended the Multilateral Initiative for Malaria (MIM) conference last week in Dakar, Senegal, and was very excited to see Africans contributing to global efforts to address the malaria scourge. Malaria kills about half a million people yearly, the most vulnerable being children under the ages of five and pregnant women. Global targets have already been set to eliminate malaria in many countries by 2030, which would reduce the number of endemic countries from 91 to 56.

Whilst there has been some progress previously in the fight against malaria, this progress has come to a halt, even showing early signs of reversal. This is the case in Nigeria, where, in 2017, 57.3 million people were affected by malaria, a slight increase from 56.2 million in 2015. Nigeria contributed to 27% of the global malaria burden, 30% of malaria cases in the African region, and 52% of all malaria cases in the West African region.

Nigeria changed its strategy from malaria control to elimination in 2016 and aims to have reached pre-elimination by 2020. From current data, this means malaria cases should be drastically reduced to about 207,000 cases by 2020. As we mark World Malaria Day, it's important to assess where

Nigeria currently is with the 2020 agenda and discuss what needs to be done to reach the goal of pre-elimination, especially as the country was highlighted as one of the highest burden areas during the MIM conference.

### The Good News

Over the years, there have been gains in malaria control due to renewed enthusiasm, which has led to increased funding, better coordination and innovative strategies. The WHO aims to end the epidemic of malaria by 2030, and malaria policies in Nigeria have evolved to better suit the country and align with global targets. For example, Nigeria's malaria policy has focused on malaria control/elimination interventions at National, State and Local government levels; strengthening programme coordination at all levels; improving unified annual planning among all stakeholders; developing a comprehensive strategy for private sector engagement; by also improving partner coordination; and by improving timely reporting of malaria control efforts.

## More Needs to be Done

Nigeria has also adopted tools to fight this scourge. For instance, the country has seen some increase in ownership and utilisation of long-lasting insecticidal nets. Whilst the use of these has increased, coverage levels and access are still below country targets.

Interventions focused on case management are also very low. For instance, in the 2015 Malaria Indicator Survey, while the percentage of children under 5 with malaria was 40%, only 5% got tested, and 15% received an artemisinin-based combination therapy in a health facility. Nigeria's surveillance systems also detect less than 20% of all malaria cases, much lower than other malaria-endemic countries and only slightly higher than Mauritania, India and Gabon. All these efforts are not sufficient as indicated by the most recent World Malaria Report, which shows that Nigeria has the highest estimated country share of total malaria cases, with case incidences of malaria on the rise. These findings come just two years to the pre-elimination target the country has set. Which begs the question: is malaria elimination a reality within this context or a myth?

## The Road to Pre-Elimination

For Nigeria to reach pre-elimination, core strategies must be intensified, coupled with domestic financing and complete program ownership. Nigeria must prioritise the need for good data, as this will lead to evidence-based decision making, leading to efficient delivery of interventions.

Its intensified strategies should include integrated vector management consisting of vector control in major irrigation and agricultural projects, rigorous entomological

surveillance that include targeted spraying in high-risk areas, new classes of insecticides for indoor residual spraying, insecticide-treated nets and larval control, supplemented by using strengthened parasitological surveillance for active case detection combined with rapid response.

This strategy was adopted in countries that eliminated malaria, such as Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan. Nigeria will also benefit from active case detection directed at high-risk areas and for hard to reach populations that have poor access to diagnosis and treatment.

## Surveillance as an Intervention

The countries that have eliminated malaria made surveillance a core intervention as recommended by WHO. For Nigeria to progress from its current position, surveillance has to be taken more seriously. Surveillance is very important, especially now that there are reports of malaria drug resistance in South East Asia. There are fears from experts that resistance will spread to Africa, which could make malaria elimination even more difficult. As a result, it is important that Nigeria has surveillance systems put in place to monitor drug resistance.

Effective surveillance of malaria cases and deaths is also important for identifying the areas or population groups that are most affected by malaria, and for targeting resources for maximum impact. A strong surveillance system requires high levels of access to care and case detection, and

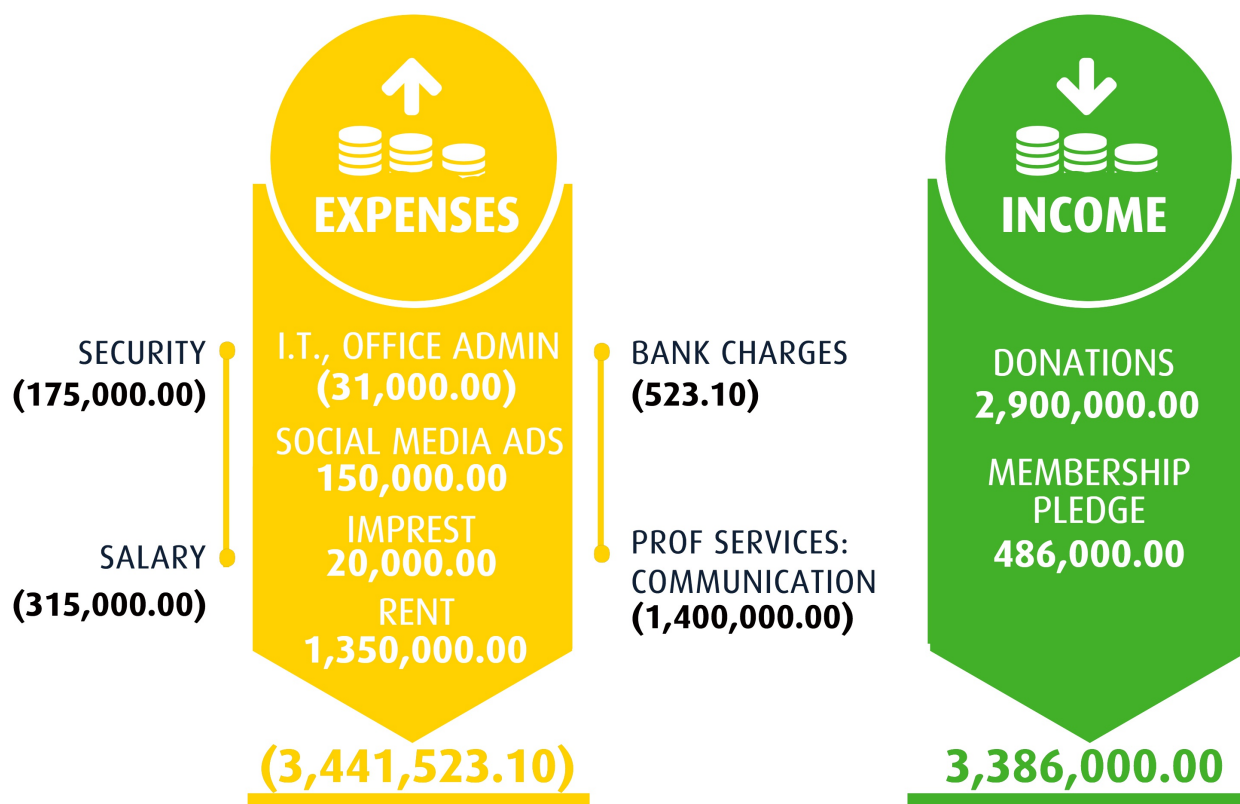
complete reporting by all health sectors, whether public or private. Nigeria has a weak malaria surveillance system, with only 16% of cases detected. Lessons from the 17 countries that have successfully achieved malaria elimination between 2000 to date show that surveillance was a critical factor to their success.

The most important factor needed for malaria elimination is country ownership. Nigeria needs to take responsibility for the problem and drive the response through strong political will. This also means that the

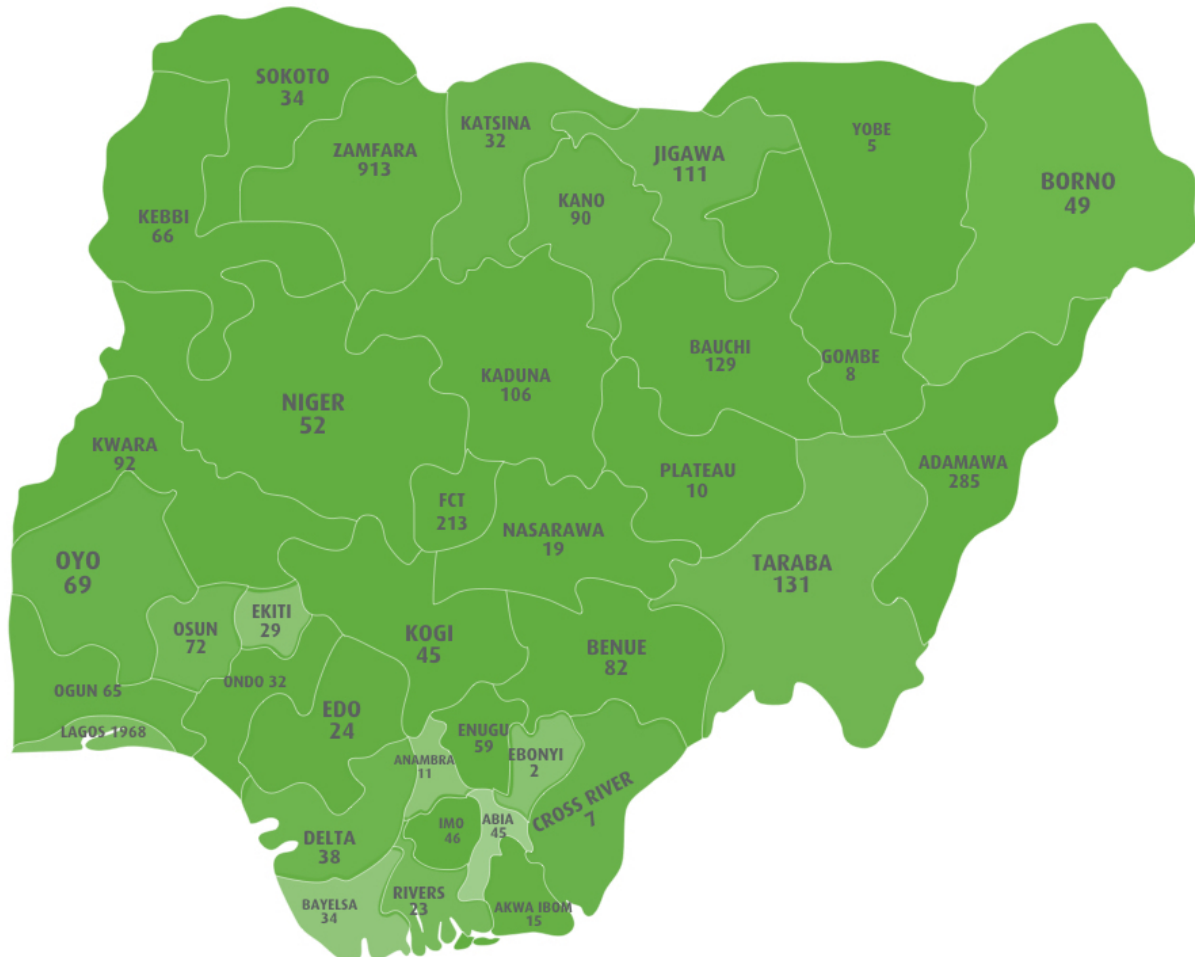
country must increase its domestic financing to fight the disease, as currently, domestic funding does not mirror the current elimination aspirations, hence the heavy reliance on donor funding.

Whilst external and financial assistance can help accelerate the process, ownership and increased domestic funding are important factors needed to sustain gains until elimination is achieved. This World Malaria Day, I call on Nigeria to decide whether eliminating malaria is a reality or a myth for the country.

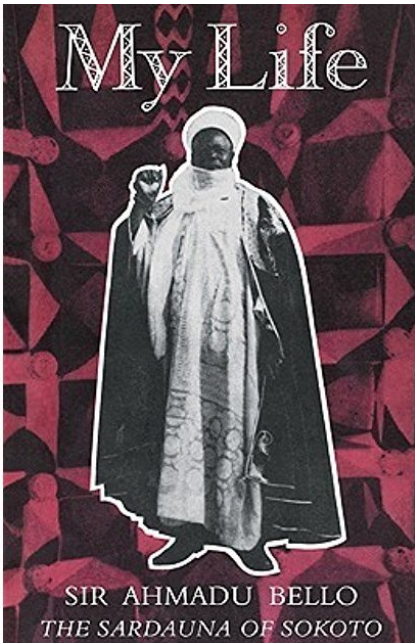
## Financials for May 16, 2018 - June 16, 2018



**Liabilities: 2,661,750.00**



Total number of members as at June 18, 2018: 5,011



## My Life

by Ahmadu Bello

Review by Olasumbo Ajibade

### BOOK REVIEW

Published in 1962, *My Life* is the autobiography of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. The book tells the story of the late Ahmadu Bello, from his humble beginnings in the village of Rabah in Sokoto to becoming the first and only Premier of the Northern Region.

Born in 1910, Sir Ahmadu Bello was a direct descendant of Uthman Dan Fodio, the famous northern revolutionary leader. The Sardauna was born at a time when Northern Nigeria lacked Western educated political leaders and its people were considered politically and educationally backward compared to the other regions in Nigeria.

According to him, his visit to Lagos in 1949 had a profound impact on his political ambition. After meeting with high calibre Nigeria politicians such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, he realised that the North had to take politics more seriously, to avoid being left behind in the future developmental policies of Nigeria. He later became the President of the Northern People's Congress that won the 1959 pre-independence parliamentary elections.

The book explains why, despite Ahmadu Bello's Fulani extraction and heritage, he was never tribalist. His ambition was unifying the people of the north and developing the region to be at par with the other regions in the country.

An excerpt from the book, which supports this claim, goes thus:

"Eight years have passed from the last crisis and we see clearly now that Nigeria must stand as one and that, as things are, the existing boundaries cannot readily be changed - nor can those of the Regions."

Sir Ahmadu Bello was a strong advocate for a Federal System of Government, which he believed would work best if tailored to the needs and aspirations of the people. This was why he was keen on regional self-government in guaranteeing that the country's regions progressed equally. This book provides insight into the life of one of Nigeria's great past leaders, and the politics of his time.



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