

# Country Disease Outlook

## Zimbabwe

August 2023



World Health  
Organization

African Region

### Background

The Republic of Zimbabwe, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, bordered by Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia. It is a lower-middle income country with a GDP per capita of US 1,744 (2021) and has a population of 16 million (2021).

### Key points

- ◆ Zimbabwe has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 39% of deaths in 2019.
- ◆ Zimbabwe had 1.2 million people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021 and has almost achieved the 95-95-95 goals for HIV, reaching 96-96-93 in 2021.
- ◆ Zimbabwe has not yet met the 90% target coverage rates for vaccination in children, reaching 86% with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and 85% with the first dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2021. The country should consider implementing catch-up strategies for vaccination.
- ◆ Zimbabwe has 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.

**UHC/CN**

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





2019

39%

of deaths due to NCDs

## 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 Zimbabwe with an estimated 342,543 cases in 2021 (at an incidence rate of 21.4 cases per 1000 people), resulting in 876 deaths. Zimbabwe's malaria incidence rate has been fluctuating but has been generally declining since 2015. In 2021, the incidence rate was below the target of the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria.

### Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

In 2020, the estimated TB burden was 29,000 cases (incidence rate of 181.3 per 100,000 people), of which 16,019 TB cases (55%) were diagnosed. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV) has increased since 2015, from 7.9 to 13 per 100,000 population in 2021. The TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has fallen from 35 to 33 in the same period.

Progress has been made on the 95-95-95 goals, although treatment rates are relatively low:

- ▲ 96% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 96% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 93% of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 1.2 million people were receiving anti-retroviral treatment in 2021.

### Neglected tropical diseases

Zimbabwe is 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, no one was targeted or treated with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are chromoblastomycosis and other deep mycoses, human Africa trypanosomiasis (*rhodesiense*), leprosy, taeniasis and cysticercosis, and rabies.

## Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in Zimbabwe. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was 822 per 100,000 in males and 701 in females in 2021.

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

## Childhood Immunization

Zimbabwe's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been fairly high, although still not reaching the 90% target coverage rates. In 2021, the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine reached 86%, while the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose was 85%. Zimbabwe experienced outbreaks of measles and rubella in 2021.

In 2021, there were an estimated 66,300 under-immunised children and 33,150 zero-dose children. Zimbabwe should consider the implementation of appropriate catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these populations from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks in the future.

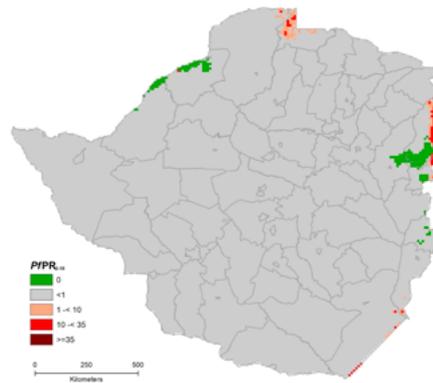
## Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 61 to 50 per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2021, remaining above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. The neonatal mortality rate decreased from 28 to 25 per 1,000 live births in the same period, exceeding the SDG target of 12.

**MALARIA**

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
<b>12.6 million</b>	<b>342,543</b>	<b>876</b>

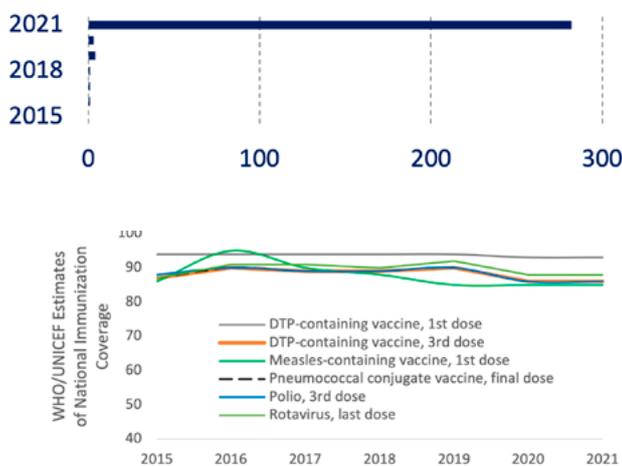
ITN use in children under five years 9% and 2% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick



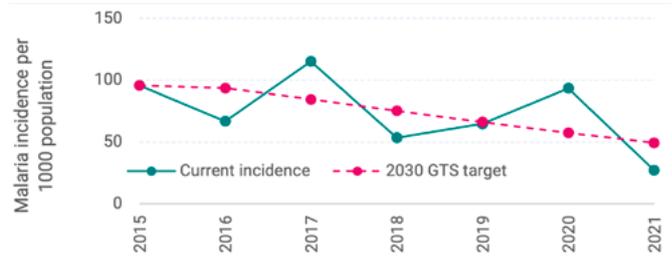
*Plasmodium falciparum* malaria prevalence in children in Zimbabwe in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

**EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN**

■ Measles



Malaria incidence in Zimbabwe compared to GTS targets shows a fluctuating but reducing incidence pattern since 2015.



**Zero dose children 33,150**      **Under-immunized 66,300**

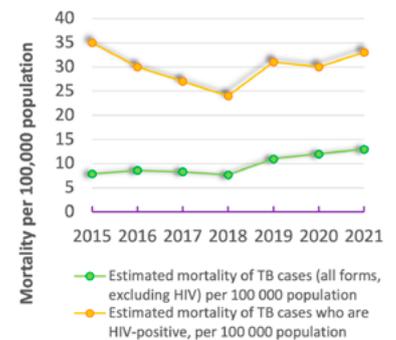
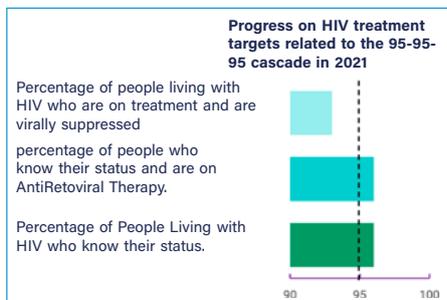
WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage bounced back to 2018 levels after a dip in 2020.

Measles and Rubella outbreaks remain public health problems in Zambia with the most recent outbreak in 2020 when the coverage level dipped.

**HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS**

- 1.2 million people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 84% Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 50% of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

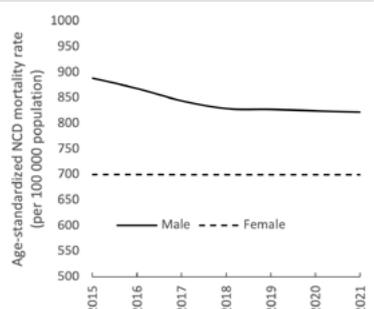
**4.1%** Domestic funding for TB  
**31%** Domestic funding for HIV



- 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
- Indicator 7B - Trans fats policies
- Indicator 7C - Marketing to children
- Indicator 8 - Physical activity awareness
- Indicator 9 - NCD guidelines

**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**  
0 targeted for MDA  
0 treated with MDA

**OTHER MAJOR NTDS**

- Chromoblastomycosis and other deep mycoses
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Rabies
- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (rhodesiense)
- Leprosy
- snakebite envenoming