

3 May 2012 – Following a nine month hiatus caused by the civil and political unrest in the country, the schistosomiasis programme's main funders, the World Bank, have agreed to reinstatement of funding for the six-year national programme.

Yemen suffers from a high disease burden of schistosomiasis (bilharzia). It has extensive reported cases of schistosomiasis and intestinal worms, with three million people estimated to be infected and 600 000 severe chronic cases.

A six-year nationwide schistosomiasis and intestinal worms programme started in 2010 with the aim of eliminating schistosomiasis-related morbidity through annual treatment. The programme is run by the Ministry of Public Health and Population and involves a collaborative partnership with the World Bank, World Health Organization and the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative.

The first treatment round took place in in December 2010 and April 2011. Around 4 million people were treated and 87% of school age-children targeted were reached. This exceeded both the programme target and the WHO target of 75% coverage. Crucially, this number included enrolled and non-enrolled children.

A treatment campaign that was originally planned for prior to the suspension will now be carried out in May 2012. This campaign is expected to deliver treatment to 2 300 000 people around the country, even in security-compromised areas.

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