



## PRESS RELEASE

### **RBM Joins the International Community in Celebrating the First Anniversary of UNITAID**

**20 SEPTEMBER 2007 | GENEVA** --The Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM) today called for celebration of the first anniversary of UNITAID, an international drug purchase facility launched in September 2006. Hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNITAID continually works to reduce the cost of high-quality AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria drugs for populations in developing countries. RBM recognizes UNITAID's work to increase access of malarial treatments to low-income populations.

UNITAID, in collaboration with partners UNICEF and WHO, supplied rescue packages of effective malaria treatments - artemisinin based combination therapies (ACTs) - for Liberia and Burundi, when they ran out of medicines and funding late last year.

"UNITAID is a key partner in the fight against malaria and its recent interventions have allowed us to save thousands of lives while also having a dynamic impact on the ACT market. Malaria kills over a million people every year, and UNITAID shows how partnerships can be active and effective advocates for a malaria free-future," said Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director, Roll Back Malaria Partnership.

This year, the facility garnered funding from minor taxes on airline tickets and other innovative sources to provide treatment for the three diseases that greatly impact the economies of developing countries. UNITAID's founding member countries--namely Brazil, Chile, France, Norway, and the United Kingdom-- partnered with 22 new members, including 19 African nations, Cyprus, Korea, and Spain, to strengthen their efforts. As more governments participate, a growing number of life-saving tools will reach communities.

With over 39 million people living with HIV, two billion people affected by TB, and over 500 million people suffering from malaria annually, UNITAID works with key partners to provide medicinal treatments to afflicted individuals in 80 countries. The facility works with civil societies, the Global Fund, WHO, the Clinton foundation, UNAIDS, UNICEF, Stop TB and other strategic partners to provide greater drug access to low-income communities.

The one-year old organization is already preparing to support national health services in 2008 by working to enhance diagnostic capacity for HIV, TB, and malaria. This will further assure accessibility of treatment to impoverished communities.

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