



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Angola is Willing to reduce Malaria Cases Down to 400,000 per Year**

**25 April 2002**

**Luanda** – The Abuja Declaration, referring to a targeted decrease of 60% of Malaria cases in the next 10 years, had a positive impact in Angola, where this disease continues to be the main cause of morbidity and mortality, with 1.330.338 registered cases per year and 11.200 deaths, said the Minister of Health, Dr Albertina Hamukwaya.

The Angolan Minister of Health made this statement at the African Malaria Day, celebrated in Soyo (Zaire Province) on 25 April under the theme” Mobilising community for the Roll Back Malaria”.

According to the data available at MoH, WHO and UNICEF, children under five years and the pregnant women are the first victims of Malaria in Angola. 35% out patients services in hospitals and health posts; 20% hospitals admissions; 40% peri-natal deaths; and 25% maternal mortality are estimated to be due to Malaria. High index of absenteeism in school and at the work place are caused by Malaria as well.

According to the Minister of Health, Dr Albertina Hamukwaya, the Angolan Government disbursed an amount of USD 1,900,000 in 2001 for the purchase of anti malaria drugs, mosquito nets, laboratory supplies, insecticides and training of health workers. In the year 2001, Luanda, Huambo, Benguela, Huila and Namibe were the provinces most affected by Malaria, while the rain season from January to April was a time of an epidemic in the Southern Provinces.

In Soyo, the WHO Representative, Dr Paolo Balladelli pointed out that if Angola builds effective capacities and implements the priority interventions in prevention and treatment of Malaria, the burden of the disease could be decreased to one third of the current figures. - Stressed WHO Representative – These priority actions mainly concern the distribution of impregnated bed nets, the distribution of equipment and supplies to laboratories and the provision of essential drugs against Malaria.

Dr Paolo Ballardelli outlined that, the MoH is able to face up Malaria in Soyo with the support of the private sector, constituted by ESSO and Sonangol.

Dr Paolo Ballardelli warned that, the final success of the fight against Malaria depends on the efforts for the poverty reduction, emphasising that “Malaria is a disease related to poverty and it worsen the state of poverty, due to its tragic effect upon the individual, family, community and nation”.

In Angola, MoH have been supported by WHO on: - support in anti-malarial drug resistance studies; - elaboration of the technical norms of diagnostic and treatment of Malaria; - support in the detection, preparation and response towards the Malaria epidemic; - acquisition of the drugs and materials; - training of the personnel for Malaria control.

As an example of very fruitful partnership, the WHO Representative, also mentioned “on-going programs against Malaria, which are being financed and supported by USAID in the provinces of Luanda, Malanje, and Huambo”. “This programs – he said – aims the study of the resistance anti malaria drugs and the improvement of the laboratory network and treatment of the patients”.

In Brazzaville, the WHO Regional Director, Dr Ebrahim Samba, commented on the resistance to anti malaria drugs as experts agree that anti-malaria drugs becomes an increasing threat - in the fight against Malaria. Dr Ebrahim Samba recognised that “one out of two Malaria cases can not be treated effectively with chloroquine, but new drugs guarantee results so attention should be given to make those new medicines accessible to everybody”.

According to WHO/AFRO Director, malaria-transmitting mosquitoes in some areas have also developed resistance to insecticides, while civil strife and emergencies have resulted in population movement to highly affected areas, thus exposing these migrant populations to high risks for malaria.

Dr Samba finally said that, WHO together with partners are working in the initiative “Roll Back Malaria”, in order to improve the technical capacity for the prevention and treatment of the disease. The initiative, both for national and community level, includes training of health professional and mothers, in order to quickly detect the symptoms of the disease, and ensure immediate and correct treatment, as well as the provision of the medication for the treatment against malaria disease.