

# MASSIVE EFFORT CAMPAIGN

**Mobilizing Society Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

## **Ineffective Drugs and Mosquito Net Taxes Betray African Families in Fight Against Malaria**

**Four years after the Abuja Declaration, pledges are not kept and over 4 million more children are dead**

April 25 – Hundreds of concerned citizens from around the world today urged African leaders to honor pledges made to stop over a million African children and pregnant women dying each year from malaria – a preventable and curable disease. Letters were delivered to each President by the Massive Effort Campaign with signatures collected on their website as part of a campaign for Africa Malaria Day.

25<sup>th</sup> April is Africa Malaria Day, commemorating the fourth anniversary of the World Health Organization's Roll Back Malaria (RBM) summit in Abuja, Nigeria to control the disease. 44 African leaders along with the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children's Fund, and bilateral donors committed there to dramatic systems reform and a massive scale-up of funding to bring malaria under control in Africa.

"Abuja was supposed to be the beginning of the end of malaria in Africa," said Junaid Seedat, Managing Director of Massive Effort Southern Africa. "Unfortunately, not everyone has kept their promise."

With only one year left to reach the targets, RBM's data indicators are grim. Less than 2% of African children are sleeping under life-saving insecticide treated nets, which protect children against malaria carrying-mosquitoes; and many African countries still tax the purchase of these nets, despite pledging at the Abuja summit to stop this taxation. Many African countries are also administering ineffective anti-malarial drugs. Since the Abuja Summit, malaria deaths have not decreased significantly in a single African country.

Artemisinin-based combinational therapy (ACT) has the potential to greatly reduce mortality rates in malaria endemic countries, but at a minimum of \$1.10 per dose it is comparatively more expensive than less effective drugs. 13 African countries have changed their drug policies to include ACT, but only four of these countries have received funding from international donors to purchase and begin administering the drug. Furthermore, the lag in donor commitment gives the pharmaceutical industry little incentive to produce ACT in larger quantities, or to invest more resources in developing safe generic versions.

"Bilateral donors have procrastinated for over two years on ACT, steadily trumpeting the rhetoric of false concern while condoning the funding of increasingly useless drugs and the needless deaths of millions of African children," said Seedat.

To meet Africa's requirement of ACT drugs, the World Health Organization estimates that another 30-50 million doses will be needed in 2004 and 190-260 million in 2005. For the drugs alone, this is estimated to cost a maximum of \$340 million over two years – less than half of what the United States spent to send two Expedition Rovers to Mars and less than a fifth of what the United Kingdom spends on its pets each month.

"I lost my fostered son to malaria in Mozambique two years ago because the drugs he was given didn't work," said Adam Bristow, an English filmmaker. "If he had been given effective drugs he'd still be alive today."

[www.MassiveEffort.org](http://www.MassiveEffort.org)

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Massive Effort also delivered letters on African Malaria Day 2004 urging bilateral donors and the World Bank to dramatically increase funding to fight malaria and letters to pharmaceutical industries urging them to increase manufacturing capacity and make ACT drugs affordable for African families.

For more information, please contact:

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### NOTES TO EDITORS

To view the letters mentioned above that will be sent to stakeholders, please visit

[www.massiveeffort.org/malaria](http://www.massiveeffort.org/malaria)

For background information on the African Summit to Roll Back Malaria, April 25th 2000, please visit

[www.rbm.who.int](http://www.rbm.who.int)

For background information on Artemisinin-based combinational therapy as an anti-malarial drug treatment, please visit

<http://www.msf.org/content/page.cfm?articleid=07B8A833-723F-4350-9D6A6412EAF51284>

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