

Statement by Professor Eyitayo Lambo, Chair of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership Board, on the occasion of the signing of the MoU between WHO and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership on Friday 14th December, 2006.

Acting Director General, Anders Nordstrom , ADG Asamoah Baah, Executive Director Dr Awa Marie Coll Seck , and all those assembled here this afternoon

This is a very special day for The Roll Back Malaria Partnership.

The hosting of the Partnership Secretariat was one of the many issues that needed to be clarified as part of the change process initiated at the Board meeting in Yaoundé in November 2005 to bring the Partnership and its Secretariat in line with the new challenges and expectations raised by endemic countries and the broader global malaria community.

Since early 2006, WHO and a number of key RBM Partners, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, USAID and the World Bank have been working intensely to develop criteria and make recommendations on key options for hosting the RBM Secretariat, including means for improving the existing hosting arrangement within WHO. I would like to commend the work of all these partners - and their incredible commitment to this task.

I would also like to commend the Executive Director , Dr Coll Seck . Her leadership of the Secretariat during this period and her invaluable contribution to the process has facilitated a very good outcome.

Since the 10th RBM Board Meeting in July 2006 the work has focused on improving the current hosting arrangement and the Board Hosting Sub-Committee has, in dialogue with WHO, discussed and agreed upon today's Memorandum of Understanding.

The signing of this MoU by the RBM Partnership and WHO signifies an important step forward in our collaboration. Today we have the basis for a hosting relationship enabling significant improvements for the work of the Secretariat and, consequently, of the Partnership as a whole.

On behalf of the RBM Partnership I therefore wish to thank the World Health Organization, who has always been a very special Board member and at the same time a founding member, hosting agency and, most of all, a very dynamic and extremely knowledgeable Partner.

I extend a very special thank you to the Acting Director-General, Anders Nordstrom . Thank you so much, Anders, for your commitment to the Partnership and to the Change Initiative and for

your personal investment and leadership in the hosting discussions leading to today's quality MoU.

My special thanks also go to your collaborators for their careful contribution and inputs, especially your Assistant Director-General Dr Asamoah-Baah, your special adviser on this, Dr Ian Smith, and to the Legal Department, in particular to Ms Dona Catliota. I say a big thank you to you all.

The efforts of all of you who prepared and finalized this MoU will now contribute to allowing the RBM Partners and their Secretariat to better focus on their mission : bringing malaria control to scale and saving the lives of millions of children.

Thank you so much.