

AFRICAN LEADERS
MALARIA ALLIANCE



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Africa-led Malaria Alliance to be Launched on Sept. 23 *African Heads of State unite to ensure UN malaria milestones are met*

Sept. 18, 2009--African Heads of State and Government will gather for a landmark event at the United Nations on Sept. 23 to commit their personal prestige and leadership to a campaign of historic ambition: to eliminate nearly all deaths from malaria on their continent by 2015. At the Sept. 23 event, they will launch the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) to provide a mechanism for achieving their goal. The event is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 23 in the UN Staff Dining Room, 4th floor.

The development of ALMA was initiated by Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, working with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Malaria, Ray Chambers. Heads of state and senior government ministers confirmed as attending the Sept. 23 event include these African nations: Comoros, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.

According to current estimates, up to 1 million Africans--primarily children under the age of five and pregnant women--die from malaria each year. And, an estimated 500 million annual cases of malaria-related illness have a profound adverse effect on the vitality and productivity of African economies. The scourge of malaria has been cited by economists as a major impediment to development of the continent.

An unprecedented \$3 billion has been provided by the international community to support Africa's leaders and bring success within reach. More than 240 million insecticide-treated bed nets will be distributed throughout malaria-endemic African countries by December 31, 2010.

In a joint statement to be issued at the Sept. 23 event, the Heads of State and Government will commit themselves to "joint action under a single plan and a single authority to fight malaria, assist in the delivery of tools to fight malaria and education on how to properly use those tools, identify gaps and urgently meet them, and work in concert with public, non-governmental and faith-based organizations. By working with one another, we can

build economies of scale and improve the efficiency of control efforts, to the benefit of all our people.”

ALMA will provide a high level forum to ensure efficient procurement, distribution, and utilization of malaria control interventions; the sharing of most effective malaria control practices; and ensure that malaria remains high on the global policy agenda.

Applauding the creation of ALMA, the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Malaria, Ray Chambers, stated, “In embracing the mantle of leadership, Africa’s leaders have embarked on a historic mission to rid their continent of malaria. By creating ALMA and joining together in a cooperative effort to defeat this deadly disease, they will reap tremendous benefits in cost-savings, efficiencies, and sharing of best practices—all of which will translate into millions of lives saved. With the prospect of success clearly visible on the horizon, there must now be no turning back until the job is done.”

In 2008, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the African Union proclaimed the twin goals of ensuring universal access to malaria control interventions throughout malaria-endemic African countries by the end of 2010, and ending all preventable malaria deaths by 2015.

In 2008, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership mobilized the international malaria community around a new plan of action – a bold and comprehensive blueprint which maps out essential steps to scale up malaria interventions and achieve the UN Secretary General’s goals.

International funding for malaria control has grown exponentially since 2004, when \$250 million was available. In September 2008, at the Millennium Development Goal Malaria Summit held at the United Nations, the largest-ever global commitment—more than \$3 billion--was announced, provided primarily by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria; the World Bank; the U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative; and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This funding is helping to deliver critical interventions, such as insecticide-treated mosquito nets and artemisinin combination treatment, as well as to reduce bottlenecks in production, procurement, distribution and utilization.

Since 2004, the production of insecticide-treated mosquito nets has more than tripled, and manufacturers estimate that more than 150 million nets offering protection to 300 million people were delivered to Africa from 2004 to 2008, covering more than 40% of at-risk populations, with 18 countries achieving more than 60% coverage. According to national survey data, use of nets among children has risen 3-fold in 19 of 23 countries and 5-fold in 16 countries since 2000. To close the remaining net gap, more than 240 million nets have already been financed for delivery by December 2010.