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**GOVERNMENT OF MADAGASCAR AND COALITION OF GLOBAL PARTNERS
LAUNCH MEASLES AND MALARIA PREVENTION CAMPAIGN**

Bringing the Children of Madagascar a Healthier Future

WASHINGTON, D.C., OCTOBER 22, 2007— The government of Madagascar, in collaboration with international partners, is launching a national health campaign to vaccinate more than 2.8 million children against measles and distribute more than 1.5 million insecticide-treated mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria—diseases which take the lives of more than 1 million African children each year.

"We look forward to the day when all children will be protected from preventable diseases that cause needless suffering and death. By mobilizing people and resources, we are making a significant difference in the lives of millions of children," said Bonnie Mc-Elveen-Hunter, Chairman of the American Red Cross. "We salute the President of Madagascar, as well as our many humanitarian partners and volunteers, as we offer the hope of a healthy life for Africa's children."

In Madagascar, from October 22-30, all children between 9-59 months are targeted to receive a measles vaccine. Mosquito nets will be distributed to children in 59 districts, where malaria is most prevalent. In addition, all children in the target group will receive Vitamin A and de-worming medicine to improve their immune systems and help them grow stronger. According to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the fight against measles and malaria are major contributors to reducing childhood mortality.

Already, partners in the Measles Initiative – led by the American Red Cross, UNICEF, the United Nations Foundation, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization – have supported the vaccination of more than 372 million children in 49 countries, helping to reduce measles mortality by 60 percent worldwide and 75 percent in Africa (compared to 1999).

Similar efforts are being made to stop the spread of malaria—one of the leading causes of child deaths in Africa. Organizations from around the world are raising awareness and mobilizing communities to distribute nets. In addition to the Measles Initiative partners, the fight against malaria is being led by agencies, including: the Canadian Red Cross; the Canadian International Development Agency; the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Malaria No More; Population Services International; the President's Malaria Initiative; the Roll Back Malaria Partnership; and others. In Madagascar, the insecticide-treated mosquito nets were produced by the private sector companies, Sumitomo Chemical and Vestergaard-Frandsen.

"By focusing the world's attention on malaria and working in a collaborative spirit, the international community is turning the corner in preventing malaria and improving the lives of children," said Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. "We are grateful to the government of Madagascar and all of our partners for showing what we can achieve together, and for bringing help and hope to the children of this country."

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MADASCAR CAMPAIGN- ADD ONE

Prior to the campaign, health workers and trained volunteers, including from the Malagasy Red Cross Society, will inform families about the importance of vaccinations and proper health care. On the ground, health workers from UNICEF, WHO and other agencies will provide technical support to the government, including logistics, social mobilization, training, and monitoring and evaluation. Trained volunteers will follow-up the campaign by educating families about how to properly use and care for mosquito nets.

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Led by the Madagascar Ministry of Health and Family Planning, the integrated health campaign is a collaborative effort among the American Red Cross; the Canadian International Development Agency; the Canadian Red Cross; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Global Health Advocates, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; the Malagasy Red Cross; Malaria No More; the Measles Initiative; Population Services International; the President's Malaria Initiative; Roll Back Malaria Partnership; Sumitomo Chemical; UNICEF; United Nations Foundation; USAID; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Vestergaard Frandsen; World Health Organization; and others.