



Press Release

**Embargoed for Release
Noon EDT, August 17, 2006**

HIV-Positive Women, Children Need Malaria Prevention, Says South African Singer Yvonne Chaka Chaka at Toronto AIDS Conference

TORONTO — Antenatal services for HIV-positive pregnant women should include insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) and malaria prophylaxis because co-infection can mean low birth weight, maternal anemia, increased infant mortality, and possibly an increased chance of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. South African singing sensation Yvonne Chaka Chaka, who serves as UNICEF's spokesperson on malaria in eastern and southern Africa, echoed the message delivered by a delegation of Roll Back Malaria Partners at the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto.

Calling for greater attention and resources in the area of malaria and HIV co-infection, particularly in pregnant women, Chaka Chaka highlighted the need for more fully integrated programs which combine HIV and malaria prevention and treatment efforts.

"Having HIV or malaria can be deadly, but having both at the same time is particularly dangerous. If you are pregnant, it can lead to serious complications for the mother, as well as increasing the chance that the baby will be born underweight and possibly HIV-positive," said Chaka Chaka. "HIV antenatal services should always include malaria treatment and prevention."

A special session featuring Chaka Chaka scheduled for Thursday August 17 will review the latest findings as well as discuss integrating services for all people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA), including pregnant women.

"Women must be empowered to protect their families and themselves from malaria and HIV," said Dr. Awa Marie Coll-Seck, former Director of Policy at UNAIDS and now Executive Secretary of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. "Both diseases place a huge burden on women - we must look at ways to increase access to both prevention and treatment and improve our understanding of co-infection issues."

In addition to the risk HIV-positive pregnant women face, recent studies have found that malaria can increase the viral load in PLHA, meaning an increased risk of transmitting HIV while infected with both. Some country projects are integrating services. For example, in Uganda, ITNs are now included in the home-based care kit for PLHA. But more integration of health services is needed to lower the chances of co-infection.

At Thursday's workshop, speakers and panelists will focus on the latest research that demonstrates the impact of the lethal combination of malaria and HIV. Speakers include

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Dr. Coll-Seck, Dr, Arata Kochi, Director of the World Health Organization's Global Malaria Program and Dr Charlie Gilks, Coordinator HIV AIDS at WHO.

The special session will be co-chaired by Louis Da Gama of Global Health Advocates - Massive Effort Campaign and Shaun Mellors, Senior Technical Advisor - Civil Society Development, International HIV/AIDS Alliance.

Empowering HIV-Positive Women and their Families to Demand Prevention and Treatment for Malaria

Global Village – Session Hall 1

Date: Thursday 17 August, 2006

Time: 10:45 – 12:15

For more information, please visit The Roll Back Malaria Partnership's booth
142 in the Global Village from 14 - 19 August.

Editor's Note: Yvonne Chaka Chaka will be at the Global Village from August 17 through August 19 and is available for interviews. Please contact Louis Da Gama to arrange an interview.

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