



Press Release

Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium joins global campaign to Roll Back Malaria

Brussels/Geneva, 27 August 2007. Her Royal Highness (HRH) Princess Astrid of Belgium announced her acceptance of her appointment as Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM) Special Representative to support the global fight against malaria—one of the world's three major diseases.

HRH Princess Astrid has a keen interest in health and global humanitarian issues. She has been President of the Belgian Red Cross since 1994, and is Honorary President of the Queen Elisabeth Medical Foundation and of the European Organisation on Research and Treatment of Cancer.

"I am honoured to welcome Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid as a new global malaria advocate", said Dr Coll-Seck, RBM Partnership Executive Director. "She is passionate and committed and I am confident she will make an important contribution to the fight".

On her first engagement as RBM Special Representative, HRH Princess Astrid will visit Tanzania between 30 September and 4 October 2007 to highlight the successes achieved under the leadership of the Tanzanian government with the support of RBM partners, and to draw attention to the challenges the country must overcome to reduce its burden of malaria by 2010.

Every year, malaria kills between 1 and 3 million people and infects 300-500 million. Malaria is the leading cause of death among sub-Saharan African children under the age of five. In addition to its human toll, malaria costs Africa US \$ 12 billion per year and up to 40% of government health spending.

Rolling back malaria is key to achieving six out of the eight Millennium Development Goals.

To provide a coordinated global approach to fighting malaria, the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership was launched in 1998 by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. The RBM Partnership is now made up of a wide range of partners—including malaria-endemic countries, their bilateral and multilateral development partners, the private sector, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, foundations, and research and academic institutions—who bring a formidable assembly of expertise, infrastructure and funds into the fight against the disease.

RBM Special Representatives are prominent individuals who use their profile and international renown to help move the malaria response forward.

Contacts

Hervé Verhoosel (French)
verhooselh@who.int
+ 41 79 701 9480 (Mobile)

Katie Gates (English)
gatesk@who.int
+ 41 22 791 2891