



Press Release

Roll Back Malaria Special Representative Princess Astrid of Belgium delivers insecticide-treated nets to primary school children

Dar es Salam, 2 October 2007. Roll Back Malaria's first Royal Special Representative (HRH) Princess Astrid of Belgium handed out a thousand insecticide treated nets to school children today.

As part of an intensive four-day visit to Tanzania, HRH Princess Astrid visited Sokoine Primary School, in Azimio ward, Temeke District. During her visit, Princess Astrid, accompanied by Dr Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, listened to the children as they described how malaria causes great suffering and prevents their brothers, sisters, friends and teachers from going to school.

It is estimated that malaria killed 80,000 people in Tanzania in 2007. While up to 80% of these deaths occurred among children under age five, school-aged youngsters also get malaria. Malaria takes a heavy toll on children even if they survive the disease. At worst, severe *Falciparum* malaria may leave them with long-term neurological impairments; otherwise, repeated episodes of less severe malaria leads to missed school days and lost opportunities for learning.

"By stealing young lives, causing long-term neurological damage in children, and increasing rates of absenteeism among school children and their teachers, malaria is striking vicious, debilitating blows at Africa's most vulnerable population, and its most precious resource. Children are our future", said Dr Awa Marie Coll-Seck.

Schools provide one of the most effective ways to reach large numbers of people, including young people, their families and school personnel. School-based activities in Africa have included malaria awareness-raising among the pupils and teachers, the distribution of bed nets, and the school-based management of malaria-related fever.

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