



Press Release

Global malaria community in Ethiopia to plan intensified battle against disease

Addis Ababa – Wednesday 28, November 2007: Health Ministers, heads of agencies, philanthropists, and many of the world's leading institutions in the global fight against malaria are meeting in Addis this week to endorse approaches to escalate malaria prevention, treatment and care and achieve high level coverage with malaria control over much of the African continent.

Members of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership Board, representing the malaria community worldwide, will examine comprehensive proposals to bring down the price of malaria treatments and engage all partners in an ambitious global business plan to finance an intensified battle against the disease.

"We will be finding solutions to current challenges", said **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Minister of Health of Ethiopia, Chair of the RBM Partnership Board.** "I am looking forward to highly constructive debate and strategic outcomes that will bring us all closer to eliminating the disease as a threat to the health of our communities."

Results emerging from countries show that with increased targeted support and innovative efforts to distribute antimalarial commodities, the fight against malaria is gaining ground. Tanzania, Mozambique, Zanzibar, Namibia and Eritrea have achieved appreciable success in reducing the number of malaria cases and data from Zambia shows a near 30% reduction in deaths from malaria in children under 5 years.

In Ethiopia a total of eighteen million insecticide-treated nets have been distributed in malarious regions bringing two treated nets to each household over the last 18 months. The recent UNICEF report showed that between 2000 and 2005 Ethiopia reduced deaths from malaria in young children by 20%.

Last month the Global Fund awarded US\$469million in grants for malaria to 18 countries who had worked with RBM partners to improve their grant proposals. Mass net distribution campaigns in Niger, Madagascar, Benin, Kenya, Togo are among those programs which the Global Fund announced yesterday have delivered 46 million insecticide treated nets, a 154 per cent increase over last years result of 18 million.

"More resources are available, more nets are getting to communities, but we need an increase in the up-take of effective malaria treatments and critical alignment of all partners behind country plans to reach our targets," said **Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization.**

Malaria poses one of the greatest threats to human life in the developing world. Of the estimated 1 million malaria deaths worldwide, 90% occur in Africa, killing mostly young children at a rate of 3,000 every day. Malaria costs Africa US\$12 billion every year in lost productivity. Currently, in countries with a very heavy malaria burden, the disease can account for as much as 40% of public health expenditure, 50% of inpatient admissions and up to 60% of outpatient visits.

Antimalarial medicines are a critical component in the fight against malaria, alongside other preventative interventions such as insecticide treated mosquito nets and indoor spraying with insecticide.

"We have the knowledge, the tools, and the will to succeed," said **Ray Chambers, Co-Chairman of Malaria No More**. "We will work hand in hand with all the Roll Back Malaria partners to end this scourge. No more children should die from malaria, entire countries should no longer suffer."

The 13th Roll Back Malaria Partnership Board follows closely on the heels of the Gates Malaria Forum in Seattle last month where a daring challenge was made to build on recent successes and aim for eventual eradication of the disease.

Partners participating the RBM Board include: Ethiopia, Cambodia, Mali, Uganda, Zambia, Cameroon, Nigeria, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, WHO, France, Netherlands, United States of America, Earth Institute, Medicines for Malaria Venture, Southern NGOs - Nigeria and Zambia, Northern NGOs - John Hopkins Global Program on Malaria, Malaria Consortium, Glaxo Smith Kline, Novartis, Exxonmobil Corporation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, United Nations Foundation, The Global Fund.

Special guests attending the RBM Board : Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director General; Mr Jorge Bermudez, UNITAID Executive Secretary; Mr Ray Chambers, Co Chair, Malaria No More

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The Roll Back Malaria Partnership

To provide a coordinated international approach to fighting malaria, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM) was launched in 1998 by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

The Partnership now brings together governments of countries affected by malaria, their bilateral and multilateral development partners, the private sector, non-governmental and community-based organizations, foundations, and research and academic institutions around the common goal of halving the global burden of malaria by 2010.