



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Counting Down to 2010: Global Action Boosts Access to Malaria Prevention and Treatment and Drives Momentum for Elimination

#### **Roll Back Malaria Global Malaria Action Plan guides progress**

Commemorating the second World Malaria Day 2009, Roll Back Malaria partners and country representatives announce new ambitious initiatives to achieve universal coverage with malaria control tools in the countdown to 2010, to reach near-zero deaths by 2015 and begin to tackle malaria elimination in more countries.

"We have just two years to achieve universal coverage with malaria control interventions," said Prof. Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership. "On this World Malaria Day we can report a dramatic upsurge in action by all partners - new data, new initiatives, a vast expansion of groups joining the malaria fight. This is a triumph of countries' efforts, international cooperation and demonstrates unwavering commitment to implementing the RBM Global Plan and saving lives."

Unveiled last week, a new initiative will lower the price of lifesaving antimalarial treatments Artemisinin-based Combination Therapies (ACTs)- and will make them widely available to those who need them most. The **Affordable Medicines Facility for Malaria** will be rolled out in 11 malaria endemic countries in the coming year.

Launched today, the UNICEF progress report, **Malaria & Children: Progress in Intervention Coverage**, highlights a substantial increase in the number of insecticide nets reaching people at risk in many sub-Saharan African countries. The number of ITNs produced worldwide has increased from 30 million in 2004 to 100 million in 2008. The report also confirms that access to ACTs remains low in many countries.

The World Health Organization reported this week that Zambia now joins Eritrea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Zanzibar in announcing a significant reduction in deaths from malaria. A sixty-six per cent decline in malaria deaths was observed in Zambian health facilities - evidence that malaria control is achieving results.

"The funding destined for countries increased significantly in 2008 to nearly US\$ 2 billion," said Dr Theodoros Adhanom, Health Minister of Ethiopia and RBM Board Chair. "This will help fuel country programmes and campaigns in the countdown to 2010 and move us closer to the target of universal coverage."

Malaria is a potentially deadly disease that is transmitted through the bites of mosquitoes. Half of the world's population – or approximately 3.3 billion people in more than 100 countries or territories – are at risk of contracting malaria, with nine in ten deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. The disease kills more than 3,000 children under five years of age per day – roughly one every 30 seconds.

But universal access to malaria prevention and treatment tools will save lives and yield results in multiple areas of health and development. Controlling malaria is a key component of the global effort to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Cross-border initiatives for malaria elimination are now on the agenda of a growing number of countries in Africa : Eight countries -Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe - met last month to review their strategies. New guidance is being launched today by the Malaria Elimination Group to support 39 countries which have embarked on this next step of implementation.

Also announced today by the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty, new global support under the banner “**One World Against Malaria**,” will mobilize a multi-year effort to engage faith-based leaders and institutions to increase the distribution and use of insecticide treated nets and other malaria control interventions.

This follows the **African First Ladies Summit** earlier this week in Los Angeles, which advocates that greater attention to malaria will improve maternal and child health. Malaria accounts for 20% of all child deaths in Africa; malaria is also four times more likely to strike pregnant women than other adults.

In a joint Statement, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership highlight the urgent need to ensure that displaced people and refugees are included in all malaria control efforts.

A new web platform to share tools to support the country wide scale-up of malaria control interventions was also launched this week. The **RBM Toolbox** contains a wide range of proven tools and methods that countries can adapt to plan, manage, implement, and track the progress of their malaria control scale-up.

World Malaria Day is being commemorated on a global scale – in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa - through targeted, high visibility RBM partner initiatives. These include malaria briefings in the US Congress, UK and EU Parliaments, campaigns to mobilise increased support from communities and faith-based organisations north and south, and large-scale public awareness events in many endemic countries. A list of World Malaria Day events is available on the World Malaria Day Website at [www.rbm.who.int/worldmaliaday/events.html](http://www.rbm.who.int/worldmaliaday/events.html).

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## About the RBM Global Partnership

The RBM Partnership is the global coordinator of the fight against malaria. RBM draws its strength and experience from hundreds of partners from malaria endemic countries, country donors, companies, non-governmental and community organisations, foundations and research and academic institutions. RBM partners' collective aim is to reduce annual malaria deaths from around one million to virtually zero by 2015 through the implementation of the Global Malaria Action Plan (GMAP). The GMAP outlines RBM's vision for a substantial and sustained reduction in the burden of malaria in the near and mid-term, and the eventual global eradication of malaria in the long term with the introduction of new tools.

## Contacts

Hervé Verhoosel - New York  
Mobile :+1 917 345 5238  
Direct : +1 212 963 6003  
Email: [verhoosel@un.org](mailto:verhoosel@un.org)

Pru Smith - Geneva  
Mobile: +41 79 477 1744  
Direct: +41 22 791 4586  
Email: [smithp@who.int](mailto:smithp@who.int)

Michel Aublanc - Paris  
Mobile: +33 06 08 719 795  
Direct:+33 01 69 286 286  
Email: [michel.aublanc@orange.fr](mailto:michel.aublanc@orange.fr)