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Defeating malaria vital to achieving global development targets – Migiro



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon inspects a mosquito net at Mwandama Millennium Village, Malawi in May 2010

27 July 2010 – The fight against malaria is integral to boosting women’s and children’s health and achieving the other Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro told Africa leaders, urging them to build on the progress made so far to defeat the disease.

“If you continue to see malaria control as an integral part of reaching the MDGs... of building strong health systems... of improving your people’s well-being... then the success we have seen to date will continue, and grow,” Ms. Migiro said yesterday in [remarks](#) to the meeting in Kampala, Uganda, of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA).

Launched at UN Headquarters in New York in September 2009, ALMA seeks to ensure efficient procurement, distribution, and utilization of malaria control interventions; facilitate the sharing of effective malaria control practices; and ensure malaria remains high on the global political agenda.

The 26-nation coalition aims to defeat the disease, which accounts for more than 25 per cent of all deaths of children under the age of five across Africa, affects at least 50 million pregnant women and is responsible for 10 per cent of all maternal mortalities every year.

Ms. Migiro noted that ALMA has already made significant headway on some of the key issues related to malaria control, including ensuring pooled procurement of goods and services, and eliminating taxes and tariffs on these life-saving products.

“The new investments you triggered are now paying off,” she said, also noting that the use of insecticide-treated bed nets is widespread and indoor spraying reached nearly 60 million people in 2008.

She pointed out that the number of malaria cases has fallen by more than 50 per cent in nine African countries over the past decade. A recent analysis of malaria scale-up in 35 African countries revealed that more than 680,000 lives had been saved between 2000 and 2009, most of them since 2006.

Investment in malaria control, she added, is helping countries reach not only Millennium Development Goal 6 – to halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases by 2015 – but also MDGs 4 and 5 on child and maternal health.

“However, these results remain fragile, and tremendous challenges remain,” she stated.

The challenges she cited include finishing the job of scaling up life-saving measures, noting that 85 per cent of the world's malaria cases and 90 per cent of malaria-related deaths still occur in Africa.

She said it is also vital to address the emergence of mosquitoes that are resistant to some of the insecticides used on mosquito nets and for indoor spraying, including by training more experts to monitor and analyse this situation.

In addition, African countries must take urgent steps to ensure that medicines for malaria are marketed, sold and used properly, according to the Deputy Secretary-General.

“Malaria is an ancient enemy. The fight against it will be long,” said Ms. Migiro. “But we are on the road to success. With perseverance, we will win.”

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