

Leaders at UN event pledge to scale up efforts to end malaria deaths by 2015



A child sleeps under a malaria bednet

22 September 2010 – African leaders and global health experts rallied at the United Nations today to boost access to life-saving bednets and medicines as part of the fight against malaria, aiming to reach the goal of near-zero deaths by 2015.

“We have made solid advances in recent years both in reducing deaths and increasing the use of life-saving nets. The goal of ending malaria deaths is within reach, and I urge all partners to sustain the momentum,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

A UN Headquarters event on “Bridging the Malaria Gap” brought together members of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (**ALMA**) – a coalition of 35 heads of State committed to working together to end malaria in Africa, where the disease claims more than 850,000 lives each year – as well as prominent figures in the fields of global health and development.

“Thanks to the dedication of those in this room and thousands of unsung heroes, Africa is being freed from one of its heaviest burdens – and one of the biggest obstacles to its development,” Mr. Ban said in **remarks** delivered at the event by his Special Envoy on Malaria, Ray Chambers.

“In a very short time, the world has gone from simply trying to hold malaria at bay, to the goal of delivering effective and affordable care to all who need it.”

The Secretary-General has set the goal of providing life-saving malaria control interventions to the 700 million people at risk of the disease in sub-Saharan Africa by the end of 2010.

African leaders announced several efforts to help achieve this goal, including eliminating taxes and tariffs on bednets, medicines and other life-saving products; banning artemisinin monotherapies that increase disease resistance; and enhancing Africa’s capacity to produce safe and effective anti-malaria products.

Providing bednets to everyone living in malaria-endemic countries by the end of this year has been deemed the most effective way to reach the goal of zero or near-zero deaths by 2015 and ending a scourge that results in an estimated 1 million deaths worldwide every year.

“Today enough nets are in place to protect 75 per cent of those at risk, and we will reach universal coverage by December 31, 2010, an astounding testimony to the power and efficacy of the unified global campaign,” Mr. Chambers stated.

He noted that these nets have reached nearly 500 million people in the last two years alone, and their impact on saving lives is profound, with current levels of intervention saving 200,000 lives per year.

“We are on track to meet the Secretary-General’s goal of ending malaria deaths by 2015, and our work won’t be finished until we do.”

Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda of Tanzania, speaking on behalf of President Jakaya Kikwete, the current chair of ALMA, **called** for global support to help Africa achieve the anti-malaria targets.

“Partnership is absolutely essential to making progress against malaria, and Africa’s heads of State are fully committed to achieving victory against malaria in the next decade,” he stated. “We owe our children nothing less.”

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