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## **UN calls for intensified efforts to reach goal of no more deaths from malaria**



A migrant worker with fever getting tested for malaria at a clinic in Thailand's Chantaburi province

21 April 2011 – The world must dramatically step up its existing efforts to conquer malaria if it is to reach the goal of near zero deaths from the disease – which, despite being preventable and curable, currently kills almost 800,000 people every year – by 2015, the United Nations warns today.

Ahead of [World Malaria Day](#), which is officially observed on Monday, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said the goal will not be met unless there is “an extraordinary intensification” in two key areas.

“First, scaling up the life-saving and cost-effective interventions that have already produced such dramatic results,” he said in a [message](#) marking the Day. “We need to ensure universal coverage for all people at risk.

“Second, providing timely testing for all persons suspected of having malaria, and effective treatment for those confirmed to have the disease.”

Mr. Ban stressed that these efforts, even if implemented, will not be sufficient to defeat the mosquito-borne disease.

“Parasite resistance to our best anti-malarial medicines is a major threat. We must respond by implementing our global plan to overcome such resistance.”

Malaria is a leading killer of children under the age of five, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where a child dies every 45 seconds on average from the disease. In total, around 781,000 people are estimated to die every year, and in some countries it accounts for one in five of all childhood deaths.

The economic costs from malaria are also high. Malaria-related illnesses and mortality cost \$12 billion each year in Africa alone, and shave as much as 1.3 per cent off the gross domestic product (GDP) of the worst affected countries.

Mr. Ban said that all donors and international partners need to increase their investments in both research activities and existing programmes to defeat the disease.

“Let us also build up human capacity in malaria-endemic countries; our continued success depends on the hard work and dedication of these unsung heroes. And let us recognize that a world free of the burden of malaria will be a safer and healthier world for all.”

But he also noted that “there is much to celebrate” in recent years in the battle against malaria, particularly thanks to the distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and increased indoor residual spraying with safe and effective insecticides.

“Together with improved testing and treatment, these measures have saved nearly 750,000 lives over the past decade.”

On Monday, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Malaria Ray Chambers will attend a round-table event in New York, while a photographic exhibition entitled “Champions to End Malaria” will open at UN Headquarters.

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[African anti-malaria initiative offers good model for tackling other ills, says Ban](#)