



African leaders join forces to help achieve UN goal for malaria prevention



A child sleeps under a malaria bednet

1 February 2010 – Dozens of African leaders met today in Ethiopia to tackle the challenges facing the continent in the effort to meet the United Nations target of ensuring universal access to malaria control measures by the end of this year.

Some 26 heads of State convened the first working session of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) during the annual African Union (AU) summit, which got under way yesterday in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa.

ALMA aims to defeat the disease, which accounts for over 25 per cent of all deaths of children under the age of five across Africa, affects over 50 million pregnant women and is responsible for 10 per cent of all maternal mortalities every year.

As much as 40 per cent of health-care spending in endemic countries goes on malaria, costing the continent around \$12 billion a year, according to a press release issued by ALMA.

The 26-nation ALMA coalition said that in the past 12 months alone at least 90 million long-lasting, insecticidal mosquito nets were delivered in Africa, and overall 200 million such nets have been distributed to 400 million people in sub-Saharan Africa, where virtually all malaria deaths occur.

“The world is closer than ever before to ending malaria deaths,” said the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s Special Envoy for Malaria Ray Chambers, with the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) 2009 World Malaria Report indicating that more than one-third of malaria-affected countries have documented reductions in cases of more than 50 per cent.

“In the remaining year until the Secretary-General’s deadline to ensure that all people at risk are protected from the disease, African leadership has the greatest authority to ensure the realization of these goals,” added Mr. Chambers.

“By collaborating through ALMA and joining together to defeat this deadly disease, Africa’s leaders are reaping tremendous benefits in cost-savings, efficiencies, and

sharing of best practices – all of which will translate into millions of lives saved,” said Mr. Chambers.

ALMA was launched during the General Assembly in September to provide a forum 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.

Mr. Chambers is in Addis Ababa as part of a three-day trip, which will take him to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) tomorrow to meet with the country’s Health and Finance Minister. The DRC is tied with Nigeria as the country with the world’s highest malaria burden and faces a shortfall for the purchase of 14 million nets.

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