



## **Leaders at United Nations General Assembly Step Up Commitments to End Malaria for Good**

*Heads of State, Ministers from Monaco, Swaziland, U.S., and Zambia Pledge Political and Financial Support to Eliminate the Disease that Puts Half the World at Risk*

*U.S. President's Malaria Initiative Announces Addition of 5 New Focus Countries, Expanding its Effective Anti-Malaria Efforts Across Sub-Sahara Africa*

**New York (September 21, 2017)** – Today, country leaders and senior officials from across Africa, Europe, Asia Pacific and the Americas announced new political and financial commitments to accelerate the global fight towards eliminating malaria – a disease that claims the life of a child every two minutes and puts half the world at risk.

Convening at the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, leaders underscored the need to intensify efforts to meet the global goal set by the World Health Organization (WHO) to reduce the burden of malaria by 90% by 2030.

King Mswati III of Swaziland, chair of the event and of the African Malaria Leaders Alliance (ALMA), said: "Remarkable progress has been made across the world and Africa in particular in the fight against malaria. This should however not give us a false sense of accomplishment and make us complacent. We must continue to keep malaria elimination as a national priority and continue to engage national and global leadership to ensure this commitment translates into additional domestic resources for health including malaria." The King also called on African countries to support a private sector fund for malaria on the African continent to be launched next year.

Swaziland is aiming to eliminate malaria by 2020. ALMA is a coalition of 49 African heads of state and government working across country and regional borders to eliminate malaria by 2030. While Africa represents 92% of all malaria-related deaths worldwide, since 2000, malaria mortality rates on the continent have fallen by 66% in all age groups, and by 71% among children under five.

"Ending the scourge of malaria is a priority for me and my government is making every effort to ensure that Zambia eliminates malaria forever. Twenty five percent of our national plan is funded by domestic resources and we are working to find new ways to fund our malaria elimination efforts," said Zambian President Edgar Lungu. Between 2012 and 2015, Zambia progressively increased domestic funding for malaria control efforts, from spending just over US\$ 8 million to almost US\$ 29 million, to keep the country on track to eliminate malaria by 2021. Every US\$ 1 invested in malaria control in Africa, on average, returns US\$ 40 in economic growth, contributing to the continent's prosperity.

Addressing the event, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "Strong political leadership is critical to eliminate a disease which burdens the poorest in our communities. By committing to eliminate malaria, we commit to improve global health, and to serve and protect the most vulnerable."

According to the WHO, 21 countries around the world have the potential to eliminate malaria by 2020. Critical to meeting this objective is sustaining and increasing financial commitments and to drive down malaria deaths and cases, and ultimately eliminate the disease.

USAID Administrator Mark Green used the occasion to announce the expansion of the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) further into west and central Africa. The initiative, led by USAID and implemented with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will launch new country programs in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, and Sierra Leone, and will expand its existing program in Burkina Faso. PMI's country expansion will benefit almost 90 million additional people at risk of malaria, totaling 332 million people at risk across the west-to-central African corridor from Senegal to Cameroon with life-saving bed nets, anti-malarial treatments and diagnostic tests.

Europe became the first continent to be declared malaria-free by the WHO in 2015, though the recent malaria death in Italy highlights the need for continued vigilance to remain malaria-free. Many European countries are helping use their political leadership and financing to advance elimination in other regions and countries. Gilles Tonelli, Monaco's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said: "Last June, Monaco hosted a meeting with the States from the Sahel region and WHO to make headway on the proposal on regional coordination response. We will mobilize the means to help them along."

Asia has made huge strides against malaria in the past few years, however 22 Asian countries are still considered endemic. If malaria is successfully eliminated from the region by 2030, it will save more than a million lives and deliver almost US\$ 300 billion in cost savings and social benefits, at a cost of just US\$ 5-8 per case averted.

The Philippines has committed to eliminating malaria by 2030. Dr. Mario Baquilod, Director of the Philippines Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, highlighted the country's innovative financial mechanisms such as the so-called "sin tax" on tobacco products, which generated over US\$ 2.3 billion in just two years being allocated to public health, including anti-malaria programs.

With Costa Rica in the final stages of malaria elimination, Ambassador Rolando Castro, the Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mission emphasized the importance of country leaders staying committed to ensuring the country gets across the finish line by 2020. The country's efforts will be critical to helping Central America become the next region to eliminate malaria.

Dr. Winnie Mpanju-Shumbusho, the event's moderator and Chair of the Board of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria – the global multi-stakeholder platform to fight malaria – said: "We cannot afford to waste a decade of progress by letting up our efforts too soon and allowing malaria to surge back. Having witnessed the game-changing impact that malaria interventions are making to people, communities and economies we welcome the commitments made today, and urge others to join us in accelerating action to end malaria for good."

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

The United Nations General Assembly Side Event: "**The Role of Country Leadership in Accelerating Global Malaria Elimination**" held on Thursday, September 21, was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Swaziland to the United Nations, and co-hosted by

the Republic of the Philippines, the Principality of Monaco, the World Health Organization, the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, African Leaders Malaria Alliance and Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance.

**About the RBM Partnership to End Malaria**

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria – the largest multi-stakeholder platform to fight malaria – is the global platform for coordinated action against malaria. It mobilizes for action and resources and forges consensus among partners. The Partnership is comprised of more than 500 partners, including malaria endemic countries, their bilateral and multilateral development partners, the private sector, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, foundations, and research and academic institutions.

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