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African Union To Observe World Malaria Day on 25 April

Addis Ababa, 22 April 2009 - The African Union Commission will on Saturday 25 April 2009, joint the International community and the rest of the African continent to observe the World Malaria Day, under the theme: “**Counting Malaria Out**”.

Commemorative activities to mark the Day would include country-wide advocacy and educational programmes organized by Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders to intensify action aimed at minimizing malaria infection, facilitate prompt treatment and prevent unnecessary deaths.

According to a statement by the Department of Social Affairs of the African Union, African children under five and pregnant women are at highest risk of malaria.

The statement further underscores that, the convergence of commitments of Africa’s leaders and those of the rest of the World has created tremendous synergy by which to mobilize capacity, resources and harmonize all existing malaria initiatives in order to finally eliminated malaria from Africa. “The continent has support from the UN Secretary-General, WHO, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, UNICEF, the World Bank, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Gates Foundation and the USA President’s Malaria Initiative and other partners”.

“According to the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Malaria, the disease drains Africa of over USD30 million per year in health costs and lost productivity. Malaria is also a major cause of maternal and child mortality and has made the people more vulnerable to HIV infection. Thus bringing malaria control to zero would boost socio-economic development of Africa”.

The Department of Social Affairs of the AU is of the view that, funding for Malaria is no longer a major constraint for implementation of programmes. What African needs now is the unwavering commitment of leadership at all levels to mobilize the whole society by providing an enabling environment at households, community, district, sectors and institutional levels for the battle against malaria to be won. Africa could then move nearer to achieving the MDGs by 2015.

According to the AU Department for Social Affairs, malaria control, elimination and eventual eradication are everyone’s business. “All of us: children, youth, adults, educated, uneducated, rich and poor, have a role to play because malaria is **predictable, preventable and curable!**” says the statement.

Worth recalling that, at the Special Summit on Roll Back Malaria (RBM) held in April 2000 in Abuja Nigeria, African Leaders declared 25 April of each year as Africa Malaria Day in all Member States. In the Abuja Declaration on RBM, the Leaders committed themselves to “*halving malaria burden in Africa by 2010.*” During the 3rd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health (Johannesburg, April 2007), the Chairperson of the AU Commission launched the “*Malaria Elimination Campaign.*” During the same year, **25 April was declared World Malaria Day.**

Furthermore, on 25 September 2008, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Malaria convened the 2008 MDG Malaria Summit on the theme “World Leaders Unite”, at which the Global Action Plan on Malaria was adopted and over US\$3 Billion were committed to the fight against the disease.