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### Africa made great progress in malaria control: UN Special Envoy on Malaria Mr. Raymond Chambers

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ETHIOPIA



Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of Tanzania, and Raymond Chambers the UN Special Envoy for Malaria

Addis Ababa; 1 February 2010 – African leaders join forces to help achieve United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and Abuja Targets for malaria prevention. In a side event during the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly 26 African Heads of State expressed their commitment to tackle the challenges facing the continent in the effort to ensure universal access to malaria control measures by the end of this year (2010) under African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) while convening its first working session.

According to ALMA, malaria accounts for over 25% of all deaths of children under the age of five across Africa, affects over 50 million pregnant women and is responsible for 10% of all maternal mortalities every year. It was also noted that as much as 40 per cent of health-care spending in endemic countries goes to malaria, costing the continent around \$12 billion a year. 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. ALMA, thus, aims to defeat the disease.

“The world is closer than ever before to ending malaria deaths” said Raymond Chambers the UN Special Envoy for Malaria, quoting the World Health

Organization (WHO) 2009 World Malaria Report that indicates 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,” Mr. Chambers underscored. “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,” Mr. Chambers lauded Africa’s effort. He further noted that he is privileged to work with the Heads of States.

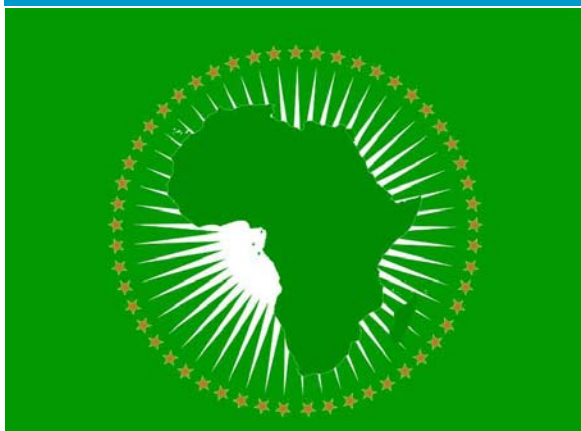
The economic cost of the disease is estimated at over US\$ 412 billion annually. Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of Tanzania, said if African leaders did not act on malaria, millions of people would continue to die from the disease. President Kikwete noted the Abuja Declaration and Plan of Action to Fight Malaria, reached by African leaders a decade ago, showed they were committed to eradicating the disease. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe on his part has called on African nations and their development partners to put greater emphasis on preventing rather than treating malaria.



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The new flag of African Union unveiled at the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government 31 January 2010 in Addis Ababa.

On the occasion, ALMA has announced the appointment of Ms. Joy Phumaphi as its secretary. Ms. Joy is former WHO Assistant Director-General, World Bank Vice President, as well as former Health Minister of Botswana. In her presentation Ms. Joy shared the finding of the Inaugural Report to Heads of State. According to the report, as demonstrated by several African countries; malaria control promotes not only the attainment of Abuja Targets and MDG 6, but also 4 and 5; and indirectly 1,2, and 3.

ALMA has the support of 26 African nations – Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sao tome and Principe, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and

Zimbabwe as well as Africa Union – who are committed to providing universal access to malaria control intervention by the end of 2010. The ultimate goal is ending malaria deaths by 2015. It 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.

### ALMA objectives:

- Keep malaria high on the political and policy agenda at global, national and local levels,
- Provide a forum for high level advocacy for the attainment of the 2010 and 2015 malaria targets including the funding needs,
- Provide a forum to review progress and address challenges being faced in meeting the malaria targets,
- Maintain the focus and attention on malaria within the International Community, the United Nations, and regional organizations,
- Furnish a platform for collective advocacy with multilateral organizations on such policies as the timely release of donor funds and the efficient implementation of the global strategy essential for malaria awareness, acquisition and dispensing malaria control assets, and
- Provide a forum for sharing of information and good practices on combating malaria.



African Heads of State convening on malaria challenges facing the continent