

The ALMA Awards for Excellence

The African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) was launched in September 2009 to serve as a unique forum through which African leaders work together to combat malaria in Africa. ALMA aims to contribute to the achievement of AU, RBM and UN targets including the aggressive pursuit of universal coverage with effective malaria interventions and the attainment of zero deaths from malaria by 2015. The membership of ALMA comprises the Heads of State and Government of 35 countries in Africa. ALMA leaders are working to overcome barriers to effective malaria control in all countries, by addressing eight principle action areas:

1. Promoting and accelerating the financing of sustainable malaria interventions in partnership with the United Nations (UN), African Ministers of Health, African Ministers of Finance, the private sector, bilateral aid agencies, multilateral and regional finance institutions, the Clinton Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the UN Foundation;
2. Enhancing vector control by distributing and promoting the use of long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) and indoor residual sprays (IRS);
3. Facilitating the bulk purchasing of malaria medicines and commodities, starting with LLINs, in partnership with UNICEF;
4. Promoting efforts to ban the production, importation, and use of oral artemisinin-based monotherapies and promoting legislative and regulatory interventions against these monotherapies in partnership with WHO and RBM.
5. Eliminating taxes and tariffs on malaria medicines and commodities in partnership with the Malaria Taxes and Tariffs Project (M-TAP).
6. Avoiding stock outs, scaling up treatment and diagnosis and strengthening Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) in partnership with UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), MMV and private sector partners.
7. Supporting the local manufacturing in Africa of all malaria drugs and commodities; and
8. Offering technical support to countries in partnership with other technical partners

To encourage countries to excel in meeting the many challenges, His Excellency President Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chair of ALMA, has recognized the need to reward the great efforts being made by countries in the areas of policy, fund raising, programme implementation, partnerships, social mobilization and advocacy. The ALMA Awards for Excellence are being launched at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2011, to recognize countries that have achieved key targets in the fight against malaria. Award recipients have been selected through an independent panel of malaria experts, drawing from implementing partners including public and private organizations, NGOs and academia. The first awards are for countries that have addressed two of the principle action areas outlined above: removal of tariffs on all essential malaria commodities and banning of oral artemisinin-based monotherapies. Four countries, **Republic of Guinea, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania** have qualified for these first ALMA Awards of Excellency and will receive their awards during the summit.