

African Heads of State Celebrate Historic Progress in Malaria Fight

African Leaders Malaria Alliance recognizes 13 countries for their role in drastically reducing malaria incidence and death across the continent

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA (January 29, 2016) – Recognizing unprecedented momentum towards elimination of malaria in Africa, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) will present awards tomorrow to 13 African countries that have shown commitment, innovation and progress in the malaria fight.

The 2016 ALMA Awards for Excellence will go to:

- Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Namibia, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa, and Swaziland for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target for malariaⁱ
- Liberia, Rwanda and Senegal for Performance in Malaria Control between 2011 and 2015
- Comoros, Guinea and Mali for being the Most Improved in Malaria Control, between 2011 and 2015

Africa has achieved historic progress in the fight against malaria over the past 15 years. Since 2000, malaria mortality rates in Africa have fallen by 66 percent among all age groups and by 71 percent among children under 5. Annual malaria deaths in Africa have decreased from an estimated 764,000 in 2000 to 395,000 in 2015.

Approximately 663 million cases of malaria have been averted in sub-Saharan Africa over the last 14 years. According to the World Health Organization, reductions in malaria cases attributable to malaria control activities saved an estimated \$900 million in case management costs from 2001 to 2014.

“For the first time in history, a malaria-free Africa is in sight,” said Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, the current chair of ALMA. “The success in these 13 countries and elsewhere across the continent demonstrates that strong leadership is our most powerful weapon against this ancient and deadly disease.”

Many African leaders have made fighting malaria a key focus over the past several years, assisted by commitments from donors such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United States’ President’s Malaria Initiative, the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development, and France’s multilateral and bilateral contributions.

Extensive use of effective and low-cost malaria control interventions, including long-lasting insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying, has led to the huge declines in incidence and death. Given that malaria-infected mosquitoes in Africa bite

MEMBERS

- Angola
- Benin
- Botswana
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Chad
- Comoros
- Republic of Congo
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Senegal
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Swaziland
- The Gambia
- Togo
- Uganda
- United Republic of Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

indoors and at night, these interventions have been highly effective. Since 2000, more than 1 billion insecticide-treated nets have been distributed in sub-Saharan Africa.

“ALMA is honored to work with these inspiring leaders,” said Joy Phumaphi, Executive Secretary of ALMA. “They are saving lives and unlocking human potential as they rid their countries of this horrible scourge. With their renewed commitment and dedicated resources, I am confident Africa can eliminate this disease.”

But there is still much work to do. About 90 percent of all global malaria cases and deaths occur in Africa. Malaria still kills an African child every two minutes. In 2015, there were an estimated 188 million cases of malaria in Africa. Furthermore, millions of Africans are not receiving the lifesaving health care services and tools they need to prevent and treat malaria.

A recent *Lancet* study concluded that reductions in malaria transmission and burden could be accelerated over the next 15 years if the level of coverage of current interventions is increased. Still, innovation is needed, particularly in areas with intense transmission.

The dual threats of insecticide and drug resistance add to the urgency of the problem. In Africa, mosquito resistance to insecticides is increasing, and in Southeast Asia, resistance to artemisinin, the most common drug used to treat malaria, is a significant threat.

Typically, ALMA recognizes countries for their antimalarial efforts in a single year. This year, nations are receiving awards for their progress over a period of five years or for their work over the past 15 years to achieve the MDG target.

Two of this year’s awardees, Liberia and Guinea, were facing a severe Ebola crisis in 2014 and 2015, making their successes in the area of malaria control all the more remarkable.

About ALMA

Founded in 2009, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance is a ground breaking coalition of 49 African heads of state and government working across country and regional borders to achieve a malaria-free Africa by 2030.

At last year’s ALMA forum, leaders adopted an elimination agenda for the continent. The African Union is set to adopt a roadmap for elimination by 2030 at its meeting later this year.

Each quarter, ALMA compiles the ALMA Scorecard for Accountability and Action to track progress in the fight against malaria, as well as in tracer critical interventions in reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health.

The ALMA scorecards identify bottlenecks and drive action to help countries meet their goals. The response rate to the recommendations in the scorecards is more than 80 percent, making this an effective tool for sustainable change.

The ALMA Awards for Excellence celebrate exemplary leadership in policy, impact and implementation in the fight against malaria. The awards are chosen by an independent awards selection committee comprised of leaders and experts in the areas of health and science.

For more information, visit www.alma2030.org

Media contact details:

Allan Kamau, Portland Communications

Fixed line: +44 (0) 20 7554 1741

Ethiopia mobile: +251 (0) 929228408

Email: alma.press@portland-communications.com

Media Tele-Conference with Joy Phumaphi, ALMA Executive Secretary:

29th January 2016, 10.30am (EAT)

Click link to join conference online: <http://lifesizecloud.com/2210698>

For more information, contact: alma.press@portland-communications.com

Links and directory:

Website: www.alma2030.org

[About ALMA Factsheet](#)

[Malaria in Africa Factsheet](#)

Twitter: https://twitter.com/alma_2030

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ALMA-African-Leaders-Malaria-Alliance-356455541093491

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/african-leaders-malaria-alliance-alma

Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/103141785@N06

ⁱ World Health Assembly target (2005) to reduce malaria by 75% by 2015.

ⁱ Algeria also achieved the target of a >75% decrease in incidence projected for 2000–2015, but as a malaria eliminating country, it is not included in the ALMA Scorecard for Accountability and Action, on which the awards are based. Similarly, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau are also projected to have achieved this target, but through modeling rather than from reported data.

