

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Date: 4 July 2023

Venue: Dakar, Republic of Senegal

MEDIA ADVISORY

African Union Commission and the Republic of Senegal Convene the Zero Malaria Starts with Me 5th Anniversary High-level Ceremony

INVITATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

What: “Zero Malaria Starts with Me 5th Anniversary High-level Ceremony”

When: Friday, 07 – Saturday, 08 July 2023

Where: Radisson Blu in Dakar, Republic of Senegal

Who: The African Union (AU) Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Senegal, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership to End Malaria, Speak Up Africa and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Why:

Despite dramatic improvements in recent decades, progress against malaria has stalled. Nearly half a million children under five die annually from this preventable and treatable disease. Most of these deaths occur in Africa, with 95% of global malaria cases and 96% of global malaria deaths. Malaria takes a heavy toll on people’s lives and livelihoods, placing an immense strain on Africa’s health systems. Yet the disease is both preventable and treatable, and today, several proven interventions exist that can help us achieve our global goal of malaria elimination. Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified an additional 25 countries as having the capacity to eliminate malaria by 2025: four of which are in Africa, namely Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini and South Africa.

Today, Africa is the world’s youngest, fastest-growing continent, with over 70 per cent under 30. However, the continent shoulders most of the global malaria burden, negatively impacting young people’s educational, economic and social outcomes. Therefore, institutions like the African Union Commission, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance and RBM Partnership to End Malaria are committed to investing in the human capital of Africa’s promising youth and developing their great potential as enablers of change by providing them with the knowledge, tools and resources they need to drive effective change for sustainable development.

In 2014, the National Malaria Control Program of Senegal, Speak Up Africa, and PATH launched a nationwide campaign titled “Zero Malaria Starts with Me.” The Campaign had three main objectives: i.) Build political commitment at the highest level of the Senegalese government in favour of malaria elimination; ii.) Mobilise the financial resources necessary to end malaria, and iii.) Increase community engagement and ownership. Individuals from all walks of life were invited to advocate for malaria elimination and rallied support and commitment from private sector companies.

In 2016, the Campaign led to the signing of a commitment to eliminate malaria by 47 Senegalese parliamentarians. In 2018, driven by the Campaign’s success and the rising number of malaria cases in Africa, the Campaign was expanded to a pan-African movement across the continent, when garnering endorsement from 55 African heads of state and government. It is now active in 27 African Union Member States, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger,

Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Today, the movement has been embraced by all sectors of society, from village leaders to musicians, mayors, CEOs, journalists, footballers, presidents, parliamentarians, and frontline health workers, all playing their part in eliminating malaria on the continent.

Acknowledging that Zero Malaria Starts with Me was inspired by Senegal's successful nationwide Campaign launched in 2014, the African Union Commission, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria are co-organising, in partnership with Speak Up Africa and the National Malaria Control Program of Senegal, a high-level ceremony in Senegal to mark the 5th Anniversary of the Pan-African movement. By holding the event in Senegal, the host aim not only to honour the roots of the Campaign but also to leverage Senegal's extensive network of partners who have made significant contributions to the Campaign and highlight the critical role of the youth in the fight against malaria.

To this end, the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Senegal, is convening the Zero Malaria Starts with Me 5th Anniversary High-level Ceremony. The event will be supported by African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and RBM Partnership to End Malaria, Speak Up Africa and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Objectives of the 5th Anniversary High-level Ceremony are to:

- i. Amplify the successes and lessons learned of the Zero Malaria Starts with Me movement on the continent;
- ii. Renew commitments among stakeholders towards malaria prevention, control, and elimination;
- iii. Increase awareness of malaria prevention, control, and elimination among populations, including but not limited to youth councils and organisations;
- iv. Engage youth champions and youth organisations by simulating the AU Youth Malaria Conversation Guide;
- v. Facilitate discussions on challenges, solutions, and the way forward for malaria prevention, control, and elimination.

Expected outcomes of the 5th Anniversary High-level Ceremony:

- i. Successful simulation of the AU Youth Malaria Conversation Guide among fifty (50) youth;
- ii. AU Youth Declaration on Malaria Elimination.

Participation at the event:

Attendance of the press is by invitation. Members of the press can submit their request to attend or interview the delegates.

For further inquiries, please contact:

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