



## World Malaria Day 2017

**World TB Day Message by  
Her Excellency Mrs. Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil,  
Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union Commission**

Today marks 17 years since African Heads of State and Government committed to key actions to end malaria as a public health threat in the Abuja Declaration on Roll Back Malaria on 25 April 2000. African leaders further declared 25 April as Malaria Day to be commemorated annually for sustained advocacy and ensuring that the disease remains high on the policy and political agenda. Today the African Union commemorates this day with the rest of the international community at a critical juncture when significant progress has been made but with the greater need more than ever before to catalyse and sustain action in the race to end Malaria for good. The progress that we have made is a result of sustained partnerships, shared responsibility and global solidarity that has seen increased global investments in malaria.

The results that we celebrate today in Africa include an estimated 23% drop in new malaria cases and a 31% decline in deaths from the disease between 2010 and 2015 . However we are mindful that Africa continues to bear the biggest burden of malaria with 90% of cases in 2015 estimated at 212 million worldwide occurring in Africa. Furthermore 92% of malaria mortality in 2015 occurred in Africa. The gains against malaria are fragile as demonstrated by the recent malaria resurgence in Southern Africa. This requires all of us to remain vigilant in order to ensure that the gains made are not reversed, and this can happen very quickly. We need to accelerate efforts to support regions on the continent that are still at the stage of controlling malaria and those moving towards malaria elimination.

We know what we need to end this disease on the continent and we know that malaria was successfully eliminated in other regions. African leaders endorsed the Catalytic Framework to end AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa in Africa by 2030 in July last year. The strategy has set bold and ambitious targets to reduce new cases of malaria and malaria deaths by 90% by 2030. Effective strategies that have been put in place across the continent to prevent malaria include insecticide treated mosquito nets and indoor spraying with residual insecticides. To succeed in our battle with malaria there is need for greater investments in surveillance and early warning systems to allow early detection and faster response to the outbreaks. Currently many countries with a high burden of malaria have weak surveillance systems and are not in a position to assess disease distribution and trends, making it difficult to optimise responses and respond to outbreaks.

Emerging insecticide resistance also remains a threat to the region's long term progress. Early diagnosis and treatment of malaria reduces the disease,

prevents death and contributes to reducing malaria transmission. We need to deal with antimalarial drug resistance as it is a recurring problem in our society. To reach to a malaria free Africa we need to strengthen ownership and leadership in countries, enhance partnerships and coordination and increase domestic health financing. Efforts to prevent malaria in pregnancy alone have averted newborn deaths globally. Less malaria means healthier societies, increased attendance at school and work, more productive communities, and stronger economies. Eliminating malaria is critical to achieving Africa's blueprint for socio-structural transformation, Agenda 2063, and must remain a key continental priority.

We must sustain political will, robust financial investment and innovation to ensure continued success against malaria. The continued development of new solutions and strategies are revolutionising detection, treatment and malaria prevention. Next-generation drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines are vital in our collective efforts to further accelerate gains and mitigate the threat of drug and insecticide resistance. Strong regional collaborations that address cross-border malaria transmission and broader health security issues help countries and regions to achieve elimination goals. We have come far in our journey to defeat malaria which we envisioned in Abuja in 2000. We need to sustain strong partnerships, continued strong political commitments and funding to end malaria once and for all. Together we can end malaria for good.