

African Union



**Statement by H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner, Health, Humanitarian
Affairs and Social Development on the occasion of the 2022 World Malaria Day**

25 April 2022

The African Union Commission joins the world to commemorate World Malaria Day 2022 under the theme “*Advance Equity. Build Resilience. End Malaria*” as we all strive to meet the global goal to eradicate malaria by 2030. I am delighted to recognise the rollout of the long-awaited malaria vaccine for children pilot programme in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi. Malaria remains a primary cause of childhood illness and mortality in Africa. Therefore, this innovation is a breakthrough for child health improvement and malaria control. I encourage further innovative establishments in African Union (AU) Member States to fulfil the [AU Agenda 2063](#) and the AU Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 ([STISA-2024](#)) anchored on building the Africa we want by harnessing the power of science and technology.

We mark this day at a time of vibrant continental effort to strengthen health systems, operationalise the [African Medicines Agency](#) and re-work how the socio-economic needs of communities in Africa are met as the AU Member States recover from a convergence of threats, including the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian emergencies and the emergence of antimalarial drug resistance in some Regions. The [2021 Africa Malaria Progress Report](#) outlines an urgent need to accelerate action across all malaria response areas: prevention, diagnosis, treatment, elimination and surveillance to end malaria by 2030. Our shared imperative is to save the lives of Africa’s citizens by rising to the challenges and closing the service delivery gaps.

The 2021 Africa Malaria Progress Report also highlights broad differences in coverage of malaria interventions within and across the AU Member States. The Report points out the urgency to allocate adequate resources to support malaria regional and cross-border coordination. It is crucial to deploy available resources efficiently and equitably to ensure the sustainability of malaria programs and ensure that funding shortfall does not lead to the upsurge of malaria. Equitable distribution of funding is equally important to ensure resources are efficiently allocated to those that need them the most. The cross-border movement of mosquitoes and people presents a constant challenge for combatting malaria. I call on the AU Member States to conduct equity analysis to assess and ensure that malaria prevention and treatment funding is distributed proportionately to the demand.

Beyond advancing equity, building long-term resilience to malaria transmission rebounds is essential to sustain the accrued gains. Innovative delivery programmes such as the [Zero Malaria Starts With Me Campaign](#) have proven to go a long way in expanding community engagement in disease control, servicing vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations and strengthening multi-sectoral collaboration. The Campaign, launched by African leaders at the 31st African Union Summit in July 2018, has strengthened political dialogue at the national level on the fight against malaria and helped mobilise actors from all sectors to achieve the objectives of the [Africa Health Strategy](#), the [Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB, and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030](#), and [Agenda 2030](#).

The Campaign has further unfolded into the establishment of youth malaria champions taking a leadership role in the fight against malaria. These youth groups include the African Leaders Malaria Alliance ([ALMA](#)) [Youth Advisory Council](#) and RBM Partnership .To End Malaria [Digital Youth Workstream](#). Involvement of the youth in the malaria response ensures that the backbone of Africa's population is a part of the decision-making process. The Campaign has also led to the establishment of the Zero Malaria Business Leadership Initiative geared to strengthen private-public partnerships for increased funding and more targeted malaria elimination strategies in Africa. ZMSWM Campaign has been launched in 24 AU Member States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia. I applaud these Member States for their leadership in the malaria response and call on the remaining Member States to join the movement.

Good health has a synergistic association with good nutrition. The nutritional status of a person suffering from malaria is one of the most significant factors for resistance and recovery. As undernutrition has been linked to increased risk of morbidity, especially in children, addressing nutrition and food security issues is crucial to combat malaria. In this context, I reiterate the [2022 AU Theme Of The Year](#) on strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent, which draws on the potential of its populations, in particular, the human capital of well-nourished citizens and in good health with a particular emphasis on women, adolescents and children.

A vision of a malaria-free Africa can be realised by achieving and sustaining universal access to preventive measures and case management and accelerating the development of surveillance systems. I encourage the AU Member States to integrate Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH), HIV/AIDS/STI and malaria services as premised on the African Union Maputo Plan of Action. This is fundamental in optimising health systems' functioning and expanding access to high-impact health interventions.

In conclusion, I reiterate the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for Increased Health Financing ([African Leadership Meeting on Investing in Health Declaration](#)), which calls for leadership and ownership of the health system's domestic financing of the health system strengthening in Africa . As we prepare for the Seventh Global Fund Replenishment, I call on the AU Member States to share in understanding the significance of meeting the new target of USD\$18 billion to save more lives and attain a malaria-free Africa.

I thank you.