



MEDIA ADVISORY

PRESS CONFERENCE: WEDNESDAY, 4 NOV, 10:15 AM, MIM PRESS ROOM, KICC

- Dr. Regina Rabinovich, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Dr. Robert Newman, Global Malaria Program, WHO
- Dr. Willis Akhwale, Kenyan National Ministry of Health
- Dr. Pedro Alonso, MalERA
- Dr. Michael MacDonald, President's Malaria Initiative/USAID

Malaria Researchers Say New Tools are Needed to Eradicate Malaria, and Expanded Access is Essential

Innovation, alongside increased access and operational research for today's best malaria interventions, provides best hope for eradication

NAIROBI, 4 NOVEMBER 2009 – As the 5th Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) Pan-African Malaria Conference reached its halfway point on *Malaria Elimination/Eradiation Day*, leading researchers, policy makers and public health professionals focused on the long-term goal of malaria eradication.

Achieving eradication will require an integrated approach with new and existing tools – including drugs, diagnostics, long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLINs), indoor residual spraying (IRS), other forms of vector control, and ultimately a vaccine. But beyond the tools, it will also require education; training and empowerment of patients, caregivers and health care workers; and political will, community leadership and sustained donor funding for innovation.

POLITICAL WILL

Research presented at MIM has highlighted recent achievements in malaria control, raising hopes that dramatic reductions in the burden of malaria may be closer than once thought. For example, just 5 years ago malaria was the leading cause of death in Rwanda. Now, under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, a comprehensive approach to malaria prevention and treatment has led to a decrease in malaria mortality by 60 percent in just two years. Rwanda and other endemic countries can now focus on further efforts towards eradication.

Despite these gains, stakeholders gathered at MIM agree that eradication will require true commitment from African policymakers, national malaria control program officers, donors and other implementing partners. Partnerships among these groups have led to some of the most effective malaria control advances in recent years, and will be essential for success.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the week, scientists at MIM have discussed groundbreaking research on new malaria interventions that can help the global community reach effective eradication of malaria. With a promising new vaccine now in the pipeline, innovative new drugs in development, and a strong toolkit of existing interventions, eradication appears to be an achievable goal.

However, donors must continue to invest in new tools development to maintain a pipeline of products, such as drugs and insecticides, that can replace existing tools as the malaria parasite and vectors evolve and resistance renders interventions ineffective.

ACCESS

Experts gathered at MIM agree that without a concerted effort to massively scale up and sustain use of today's best tools and tomorrow's new ones, eradication will not be possible. High tech, cutting-edge, effective, life-saving interventions are pointless if the global community cannot find ways to guarantee that they get to those who need them most. Malaria interventions must be available, affordable and appropriate for local contexts.

Research released at MIM – for example, an unprecedented study on access to artemisinin-combination therapies (ACTs) – will provide evidence for policy decisions and discussions around international financing mechanisms that would increase access to lifesaving interventions.

ADVOCACY

Despite recent strides in research and implementation, eradication will not be easily attained. Continued political support combined with sufficient and sustained funding will be necessary to ensure protection for millions of vulnerable persons around the world. Building on the foundation of malaria research, pressure must be placed on both endemic and donor governments so that they maintain support for innovative treatment and prevention, and evidence-based implementation and scale-up.

About the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM)

The Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) was established in 1997 with the dual mission of maximizing the impact of scientific research through coordinated worldwide collaboration and of strengthening African research capacity to develop new tools for prevention and treatment.

MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference Website: <http://mimalario.org/pamc>

Virtual Press Room: <http://mim.globalhealthstrategies.com>

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