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United Nations General Assembly Adopts New Malaria Resolution

Member States Recognize Progress under MDGs; Urge Accelerated Efforts against Killer Disease under Forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals

(United Nations Headquarters, New York; September 11, 2015) In the last days of the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly, UN Member States adopted Resolution A/RES/69/325, "Consolidating Gains and Accelerating Efforts to Control and Eliminate Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa, by 2015 and beyond" by consensus on September 11.

Recognizing progress made through political leadership and a broad range of national and international actions to scale-up malaria control interventions, this annual resolution urges governments – together with United Nations agencies, private organizations and foundations – to work together to overcome challenges and accelerate efforts toward the targets set out in Roll Back Malaria Partnership's Global Malaria Action Plan (GMAP) and the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Coming just weeks before world leaders gather in New York to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this resolution encourages continued and collaborative action and investment to drive progress toward increasingly ambitious malaria elimination targets outlined in the World Health Organization's and the RBM Partnership's respective *Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030* and *Action & Investment to defeat Malaria 2016-2030 – toward a malaria-free world*.

"Over the past fifteen years, we have seen tremendous progress against malaria. As the world prepares to enter a post-2015 development era, the adoption of this resolution by the General Assembly reiterates the commitment of UN Member States to keep malaria at the center of the international development agenda," said Dr. Fatoumata Nafo-Traoré, Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. *"At this critical stage, we must recommit ourselves to work together more boldly than ever – across sectors and borders – so that we can continue saving lives and unlocking economic potential in communities around the world."*

Progress in the fight against malaria since 2000 has resulted in a 58% reduction in malaria mortality globally, with more than 6.2 million malaria deaths averted. In Africa alone – where some 90% of all malaria-related deaths still occur – an estimated 69% reduction in malaria mortality among children under the age of five over the past fifteen years has helped to improve overall child survival rates and has directly contributed to MDG4.

Today, thanks to collective efforts and increased financing, the world has met and surpassed MDG5 targets to halt and begin reversing malaria incidence by 2015. Over 100 countries are already free of malaria, and at least 55 countries are on track to reduce malaria case incidence by 75% by the end of the year. For the first time in history, fewer people than ever are getting infected with malaria in Africa, and many countries around the world are focusing on elimination targets, with new regional commitments announced in the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Asia Pacific, and Africa.

However, malaria remains a major cause and consequence of poverty and inequity worldwide. It impedes economic development, undermines food security, stops children going to school, and absorbs the capacity of national systems to respond effectively to health security threats.

While completely preventable and treatable, WHO has estimated that there will be 214 million cases of malaria infection in 2015, claiming the lives of approximately 472,000 people, the majority of them African children under five years of age. Despite unprecedented progress to-date, more than half of the world's population remains at risk of malaria infection.

This resolution reaffirms the need for increased financing from the international aid community and domestic budgets alike, as well as intensified political commitment and partnerships, to further accelerate progress toward malaria elimination. While total international and domestic funding for malaria control peaked at US \$2.7 billion in 2013, current declines in international development financing is impacting the world's ability to maintain progress against malaria. Adequate and predictable financing and innovations for new tools will be critical to reach the US \$100 billion experts estimate is needed to scale-up interventions and reach malaria elimination targets outlined in the recent WHO and RBM Partnership strategies, which align with that which is expected to be included in the forthcoming SDGs.

“Malaria has consistently proven to be one of the most cost-effective investments we can make in public health,” said Dr. Nafo-Traoré. *“Continued investments in malaria control and elimination now stand to avert nearly 3 billion malaria cases, save over 10 million lives and generate an additional US \$4 trillion in additional economic output over the next fifteen years. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the estimated return on investment could reach a staggering 60:1, reinforcing evidence that continued efforts to reduce the burden of malaria have the potential to stimulate transformative and inclusive growth.”*

In 2012, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon named malaria as a top priority of his second mandate. Malaria control has consistently proven to be a strong global health investment, generating high return on low investments. Impacting all 8 of the United Nations MDGs – and all 17 of the anticipated SDGs –, malaria prevention and treatment serves as an entry point to help advance progress against other health and development targets across the board by reducing school absenteeism, fighting poverty, and improving maternal and child health.

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The Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM)

RBM is the global framework for coordinated action against malaria. Founded in 1998 by UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and the World Bank and strengthened by the expertise, resources and commitment of more than 500 partner organizations, RBM is a public-private partnership that facilitates the incubation of new ideas, lends support to innovative approaches, promotes high-level political commitment and keeps malaria high on the global agenda by enabling, harmonizing and amplifying partner-driven advocacy initiatives. RBM secures policy guidance and financial and technical support for control efforts in countries and monitors progress towards universal goals.