PRESS RELEASE

Country leaders pledge to boost malaria innovation and access to new and existing antimalarials

Pledge comes as researchers and programme delivery experts come together to celebrate Medicines for Malaria Venture’s 20th anniversary

Geneva, Monday 11 November 2019 – Today, country leaders, public health experts, scientists and researchers join Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) to mark 20 years of innovation in malaria medicines and look ahead to the next generation of interventions for what remains one of the world’s deadliest diseases.

Leaders of malaria-endemic countries across Africa and the Asia-Pacific pledge to accelerate malaria elimination through domestic funding and by creating an enabling policy environment for the introduction of new tools to boost innovation and access to medicines.

His Majesty King Mswati III, chair of the African Leaders’ Malaria Alliance (ALMA) comments: “African leaders are racing to meet the target we set for malaria elimination by 2030. Increasing domestic resources for malaria so that we can scale-up and sustain universal coverage and ensure medicines can be accessed by those who need them most is our top priority. We also commit to continue to address drug and insecticide resistance through investment in constant innovation and ensuring new solutions are made available. We commend all partners who have joined us on this critical journey, including MMV who is using data to identify gaps in innovation and developing new tools that will ensure we win this fight. I hope to be celebrating our countries eliminating malaria in the coming years. We will achieve a malaria-free Africa!”

Similarly, the Asia Pacific Malaria Alliance (APLMA), in line with its goal to achieve a malaria-free Asia-Pacific by 2030, is supporting efforts to expand health financing and introduce new malaria medicines. With the opportunity to eliminate malaria in Asia and the Pacific, leaders have called for a rapid and sustained scale-up of efforts throughout the region.

Dr Benjamin Rolfe, CEO, Asia Pacific Leaders’ Malaria Alliance adds: “In Asia-Pacific, we are making great strides against malaria – China has achieved nearly 3 years with zero indigenous malaria cases, Malaysia has reported no indigenous human malaria cases in 2018, and India reported a 24% fall in malaria cases between 2016 and 2017. Yet multi-drug resistance in the Mekong region to Plasmodium falciparum, a deadly parasite found across the continent, is posing a threat to global health security. Now, it is more important than ever to ensure that citizens have access to innovative, effective medicines and scale-up efforts to defeat malaria. As we celebrate the progress made by MMV over the past 20 years, we
reaffirm our commitment to increasing access to treatments for the disease and tackling resistance through the development of transformative medicines for malaria.”

These commitments mark the 20th anniversary of the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV). Since its foundation in 1999, when there were virtually no malaria medicines in the global development pipeline, MMV has developed the largest portfolio of antimalarial drugs in the world and launched 11 new antimalarial medicines that are already accessible to patients. Today there are 27 antimalarial drugs in product development; MMV and partners are committed to harnessing the latest and most exciting technologies available to address drug resistance and block onward transmission. Through partnerships between researchers, pharmaceutical companies and malaria programmes delivering medicines on the ground, MMV has helped save an estimated 2.2 million lives in malaria-endemic countries since the launch of its first co-developed drug in 2009.

Despite global efforts saving over 7 million lives from malaria since 2000, a child still dies of malaria every two minutes. MMV remains committed to address the ongoing burden of malaria by discovering, developing and delivering transformative new medicines. Recently, MMV has launched the Malaria Drug Development Catalyst, a new legal and scientific framework, enabling pharmaceutical companies to collaborate more effectively in the development of new drug combinations. MMV is also playing a key role in facilitating the first African antimalarial manufacturer to achieve WHO prequalification of their product to protect pregnant women as well as improving cost-effectiveness, availability and access to quality-standard drugs in the region.

The past two decades of collaboration between MMV and its partners have seen countless advances in the development of antimalarial medicines. Several additional pioneering approaches, in development by other stakeholders and/or MMV, to improve access to these medicines in malaria-endemic countries under discussion at the event include:

- enhanced collection and sharing of epidemiological and operational data
- innovative strategies such as the encouragement of a community-driven approach to mobilize access to antimalarial treatment in hard-to-reach rural areas
- development of new diagnostic tools to maximize access of antimalarials to eligible patients
- extending the age range for administering seasonal malaria chemoprevention to children above 5 years of age – pushing boundaries to increase impact.

Dr David Reddy, CEO, Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) adds: “Today is a chance for us to acknowledge the incredible work of researchers across the world who have been and who continue to be at the forefront of malaria research and innovation. Not only is this an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned over the past 20 years it’s an opportunity to look ahead and ensure we continue to focus on finding new and innovative solutions that will ultimately eradicate this preventable and treatable disease.
“This year, two reports from the Lancet Commission on Malaria Eradication and the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized malaria eradication will not be possible without increased innovation for new, transformative tools. MMV and partners are committed to developing the antimalarials that will help the broader malaria community to meet the long-term goals of malaria elimination and eradication.”

Malaria elimination will contribute to the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), significantly improving health and economies. MMV works with partners to ensure its malaria interventions support the WHO Global Technical Strategy (GTS) and wider objectives, including reducing malaria case incidence and mortality rates by at least 90% by 2030.

**Notes for editors**

**African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA)** - Founded in 2009, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) is a ground-breaking coalition of African heads of state and government working across country and regional borders to achieve a malaria-free Africa by 2030. All member states of the African Union are members of ALMA. [www.alma2030.org](http://www.alma2030.org)

**Asia-Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA)** - APLMA is an affiliation of Asia and Pacific heads of government, formed to accelerate progress against malaria and to eliminate it in the region by 2030. [https://www.aplma.org/](https://www.aplma.org/)

**Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV)** - MMV is a leading product development partnership (PDP) in the field of antimalarial drug research and development. Its mission is to reduce the burden of malaria in disease-endemic countries by discovering, developing and facilitating delivery of new, effective and affordable antimalarial drugs.

Since its foundation in 1999, MMV and partners have built the largest portfolio of antimalarial R&D and access projects ever assembled, have brought forward eleven new medicines and have assumed the access stewardship of a further two. An estimated 2.2 million lives have been saved by these MMV co-developed medicines. MMV’s success is based on its extensive partnership network of around 150 active partners including from the pharmaceutical industry, academia and endemic countries.

MMV's vision is a world in which innovative medicines will cure and protect the vulnerable and underserved populations at risk of malaria and help to ultimately eradicate this terrible disease.

For more information, please visit [http://www.mmv.org](http://www.mmv.org)
For more information:

**ALMA**
Tawanda Chisango  
Communication Manager  
International Mobile: +1 (929) 375-2100  
Harare Mobile: +263 71 906 6647  
e-mail: tchisango@alma2030.org

**APLMA**
Janice Apilado  
Communications Manager  
Tel: +65 67276953  
Mobile: +65 98830366  
e-mail: japilado@aplma.org

**MMV**
Elizbeth Poll  
Interim, Director of Communications  
Mobile +41 79 709 59 92  
e-mail: polle@mmv.org

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