

Press release: The UK announces further support in the fight against malaria

As the second largest international donor, the UK has been at the forefront of efforts to reduce the number of cases for many years by investing in treatment, prevention and research, including the fight against the threat of drug resistance.

Today the International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced a £100 million fund to be matched pound for pound by the private sector, which will be used to support priority countries with mosquito nets, indoor sprays and the strengthening of health systems.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We know malaria still causes one out of ten child deaths in Africa and costs economies billions every year. We also know progress on reducing malaria cases has stalled, which is why it is so important it is one of the focuses of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The UK government is a leader in the fight against malaria and has been for many years. We are the second largest international funder in the world and invest in treatment, prevention and research, including fighting against the threat of drug resistance.

Our new commitment will save countless more lives and build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Malaria is a major health issue for the Commonwealth, with 90% of Commonwealth citizens living in affected countries.

The UK's new commitment will distribute 26 million nets and ensure more than five million households in target areas are reached with indoor spraying. This money will save more lives and help build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all, which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Heads of government will be urged to make a commitment to halve malaria across the Commonwealth by 2023 at a Malaria Summit tomorrow in London co-hosted by the governments of Rwanda, Swaziland and the UK.

Today the Prime Minister supported the pledge to halve malaria in the next five years and re-affirmed the government's commitment in 2016 to spend £500 million a year on malaria for five years. UK aid has helped Nigeria cut the estimated number of people who die from

malaria in Nigeria every year by more than half – from 210,000 to 100,000 between 2000 and 2016. This year the Department for International Development will launch a new £50 million programme to push for further malaria control in the country.

The UK is also committing £9.2 million of research funding to develop two new safe and effective malaria treatments. The programme will be led by the Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU) which is a collaboration of the University of Oxford, Wellcome Trust and Mahidol University, Thailand.

This comes on top of the UK's leading work in the fight against malaria:

- Since 2011, DFID has distributed 49.7 million long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets – saving up to 808,000 lives.
- In September 2016 DFID announced the UK pledge of £1.1 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria over the next three years. In 2016 UK support helped the Global Fund to save 2.2 million lives and avert 50 million new infections from malaria, TB and HIV.
- UK funded research that supported the development of child-friendly malaria drugs has now been used for more than 350 million treatments in malaria-endemic countries.
- The UK also remains committed to its five-year pledge, made in 2016, to spend £500m a year tackling malaria until March 2021.

Notes to editors:

As part of our £500m a year commitment on malaria, today we are announcing a £100 million investment in malaria. This is a match fund which leverages support from the private sector, giving an additional boost to the fight against the disease.

This money will support the Global Fund's work in priority countries. The Global Fund works in 38 of the 53 Commonwealth countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania.

Tackling malaria not only has a positive impact on improving health services, it also increases economic growth and productivity of affected countries.

Malaria affects economic growth, with the growth rate of the gross domestic product per capita in malaria-endemic countries as much as 1.3 percentage points lower than in countries without malaria.

It can cost as little as £3.25 to avert a case of malaria – with an astonishing return on investment as malaria control brings £36 in social and economic benefits for every pound spent.

DFID supports research on infectious diseases, such as malaria, through the Ross Fund Portfolio. This follows a pledge in 2016 for the department to invest 3% of its budget in high quality, high impact research across all of its policy areas.

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