



## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### ***World Malaria Day***

#### **Malaria prevalence has reduced, but three children continue to die of malaria every day**

**25 April, 2013, Lusaka, Zambia** – The 2013 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report for Zambia, which will be launched on 7 May, brings out significant progress made, as well as needed areas for acceleration of gains. One of these critical issues is malaria. Three children die of Malaria every day. These are preventable deaths.

Since the world leaders adopted the MDGs in 2000, increase in preventive interventions and expanded access to diagnostic testing and life-saving medicines have averted more than a million deaths from malaria globally. Zambia is among those countries, which has made a significant progress in reducing malaria prevalence under 5 children from 16.1 per cent in 2010 to 14.3 per cent in 2012, according to the preliminary results of the National Malaria Indicator Survey 2012. Over 4.7 million cases of malaria were treated at health facilities and 6.1 million Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDTs) kits were distributed to health facilities in 2012 alone.

The percentage of pregnant women and children under the age of five sleeping under the treated mosquito net have also increased from 45 per cent and 50 per cent in 2010 to about 60 per cent and 57 per cent in 2012 respectively. Zambia was awarded with the African leaders Malaria Alliance Award by the United Nations in recognition of the Country's achievements in reducing malaria infection rate.

On average, each Zambian household had two mosquito nets, and 68 per cent of households had at least one mosquito net. The average rural household have at least three mosquito nets while the urban household has two nets. At least 74 per cent have nets sprayed with long lasting insecticide whilst this coverage is 63 per cent amongst the wealthiest quintile. It is commendable to note that the mosquito net coverage is higher among rural households, the poor, women and children under 5. Despite this progress, half of women population 9 (49 per cent) and over half of men (53 per cent) do not sleep under the treated nets in Zambia.

To improve this and to sustain the gains made in malaria control and prevention by Zambia, there is a need to scale up and accelerate malaria prevention efforts to focus on the most vulnerable populations affected in high malarial areas. This is mostly in rural areas, with little access to health clinics. So community management of prevention and care is an investment that must happen. This is in line with this year's theme on World Malaria Campaign – "Invest in the Future."

Controlling malaria does more than improve human health. It boosts a country's economic and human development. The UN urges the regional and national leadership



to maintain their commitment to provide universal access to malaria interventions and end disability and deaths caused by this preventable and treatable disease.

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**Notes to Editors**

*Halting and beginning to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases is one of the MDG goals under MDG 6 and with acceleration of current preventative interventions, this goal remains within reach for Zambia. Importantly, ensuring that women and children are also protected against malaria contributes to MDGs 4 and 5 on child and maternal mortality.*

*Globally, the MDG target of halting and reversing the incidence of malaria is now in sight, and 50 countries are on track to reduce their malaria burden by at least 75 per cent by 2015. However, Malaria continues to inflict a major toll on least developed countries – primarily in Africa – and millions of people still lack access to life-saving interventions. In Africa, malaria kills a child every minute.*