



## World Malaria Day 2009: Counting Malaria Out for Refugees

### Statement of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, 25 April, 2009

The UN Refugee Agency and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership are jointly committed to the elimination and eventual eradication of malaria. The world community shares this goal, which is reflected in the twenty fold increase in funding for anti-malarial efforts over the last ten years. In addition more than USD3 billion was made available in 2008 to pursue the goals of the Global Malaria Action Plan, including universal coverage for effective malaria interventions by 2010 and near-zero deaths from malaria by 2015.

The Roll Back Malaria Partnership, which provides the global framework for coordinated action against malaria, together with UNHCR recognise malaria control as a priority for the protection of refugees and other persons of concern. Delivered within a human rights framework, UNHCR's malaria prevention and control activities are guided by the principles of effective intervention in complex emergency settings. In 2007 and 2008 significant additional resources were provided to 15 countries to intensify malaria control efforts. These efforts were complemented last year by UNHCR, the United Nations Foundation and other partners in the *Nothing But Nets* campaign, providing life-saving nets to refugee populations in Africa. Between 2005 and 2008, UNHCR's focus on improved diagnostics and combination-drug therapy resulted in reductions of both morbidity and mortality in three quarters of UNHCR's operations in those countries where malaria is endemic.

UNHCR is mandated to protect more than twenty five million refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and other persons of concern. Almost two thirds of all persons of concern to UNHCR live in areas where malaria is endemic. Malaria remains an important cause of illness and death among refugee and other displaced populations. Many factors contribute to the vulnerability to malaria illness and death among refugees. Pregnant women and young children are particularly at risk of severe illness and death. Refugees may be malnourished, particularly in the phase immediately following their flight. Refugee camps are often congested and situated on marginal lands that promote the breeding and spread of malaria. Control programmes may have broken down or may not be accessible to refugees.

Refugees and other persons of concern are still too frequently left out of national interventions for malaria control. On this World Malaria Day, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and UNHCR jointly urge States to ensure refugees and other persons of concern are included in national anti-malaria strategies and to ensure appropriate funds are made available for malaria control interventions for populations in complex emergencies.

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