



EU Aid Vital in the Fight against Malaria

World Malaria Day 2012: Sustain Gains. Save Lives. Invest in Malaria

Brussels (25 April 2012) – EU policymakers and malaria experts met in Brussels today to call upon the European Parliament and Commission to provide predictable funding for the global malaria response in the next European Union Financial Framework (2014 – 2020).

Despite progress, global deaths from this preventable and treatable disease remains unacceptably high. The group of health experts and malaria researchers reviewed progress in fighting malaria and the challenges ahead in implementing the 2011 Oslo Accord, which sets the way forward in the fight against this disease and to fulfill the UN Millennium Development Goals.

In a context of budget restrictions and economic crisis, the experts urged the European Union to provide additional funding for existing and new tools, including for research and development. This funding is all the more important given the emerging threat of resistance to malaria treatment and insecticides.

International funding for malaria control increased from more than i€150 million in 2004 to more than €1,5 billion in 2011. However, this increase still falls short of the resources required to reach the UN's malaria goals (estimated at more than €3,8 billion per year 2012 to 2015) and is expected to further reduce significantly from this year. "I hope the EU will at least maintain the budget it has and find innovative ways to work with other funders," said Line Matthiessen, Head of Unit, Infectious Diseases and Public Health, at DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission.

It is vital that the European Union, and countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States sustain their investments in scaling-up existing malaria control measures. They should also ensure that research and development funds under Horizon 2020 and other mechanisms are directed towards developing the new tools that the world will need to continue to build on success to date in fighting malaria. The EU also has a role to play in financing and leveraging additional funding through innovative partnerships, such as the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnerships (EDCTP).

During the meeting, representatives from civil society reminded the EU of its responsibility to improve aid effectiveness to deliver better quality aid more aligned to the development plans of partner countries. They also called for further strengthening of the civil society response and the importance of community-based action to help reduce malaria cases. Empowered communities will demand access to life-saving prevention and treatment from their governments, influencing prioritization of health priorities from the bottom up. As Goli Ameri, Under Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, stated: *"We call for greater recognition, support and investment in community-based solutions. Malaria is first managed in the home or community and it will be at this level that we will continue to see the biggest returns on investment by empowering individuals to take informed action against the disease"*.

Thijs Berman, Member of the European Parliament Development Committee, underlined the importance of strengthening the basic health services, which are at the frontline of the fight against malaria. When preparing the Committee's report on the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), Berman urged his fellow parliamentarians to act, saying: "we need to formulate the proposal in such a way that there a guarantee of minimum funding on health".

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