



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

PRESS STATEMENT

Eight countries launch cross-border effort to eliminate malaria

2-3 March 2009. Windhoek, Namibia

Ministers of Health in Southern Africa today launched a new sub-regional partnership that aims to eliminate malaria in Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The E8 - (Elimination 8) - initiative brings together Ministers from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, four countries which have been targeted for elimination by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), to work closely with their counterparts in neighbouring Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, where malaria still has a serious impact on health and livelihoods.

In line with existing SADC strategies, Ministers will establish a cross-border approach for eliminating the disease from the low-burden countries, while optimizing malaria control in second group of countries to pave the way for their future elimination. Ministers will also develop plans for comprehensive technical support, agree a framework for financing and pursuing resources and commit to implementing key cross-border initiatives.

There is a strong rationale for a cross-border approach to malaria elimination. By intensifying control in their southern regions, high-transmission countries contribute to the achievement of elimination in low-burden countries. In addition, the success of low-burden countries in eliminating malaria up to their northern border may propel their northern neighbours into the next phase of progressive elimination.

“Cross-border collaboration is fundamental if endemic countries are to succeed in reducing malaria transmission to zero”, said Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi, Namibia’s Minister of Health and Social Services. “The experience of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI), and many others, illustrate the advantages to be gained from joining forces across borders. But to succeed, we must commit to working closely together over the long-term.”

Cross border initiatives in malaria are not new to the SADC region which last year submitted a multi-country proposal to the Global Fund to scale up malaria control along the Zambezi River. This was supported by an expedition down the Zambezi River by the Roll Back Malaria Partnership to reach remote communities cut off from services to distribute thousands of antimalarial nets, diagnostics and treatments.

Hosted by Namibia’s Ministry of Health, the “Elimination Eight Ministerial Meeting” is supported by ExxonMobil, the UCSF Global Health Group, the World Health Organization, and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership Secretariat. In addition to the Ministers of Health from the eight countries, their senior health and malaria technical officials, participants include the Clinton Foundation, the Medical Research Council (South Africa), the President’s Malaria Initiative, the Southern Africa Development Community, the United Nations’ Children Fund, and the World Bank.

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