



STATEMENT

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"Malaria Elimination in Africa"

Opening Remarks

On occasion of the

Ministerial Meeting on Elimination in Eight SADC Countries
Windhoek, Namibia
02 March 2009

By Professor Awa Marie Coll-Seck

Executive Director, RBM Partnership

Your Excellency, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia,
Honorable Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Representatives of international agencies,
Partners, colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, I would like to thank the Republic of Namibia for hosting this very important meeting, and for welcoming the participants to your wonderful country!

Thank you to our friend and brother, the Honourable Minister of Health Dr Richard Kamwe, for his leadership in health overall, and the fight against malaria.

It is with pleasure and purpose that I address the eminent audience before me today. This Elimination Eight Ministerial meeting brings us together to accelerate our progress toward malaria elimination in the region. This is one of several major developments that show that the tide is finally turning against malaria.

Today, thanks to the leadership and initiative of African leaders, malaria elimination in Africa has been placed firmly on the regional and global political agenda.

The extraordinary commitment to stamp out this disease, as seen in the last two years worldwide, has indeed been historic.

Following the African Union and the South African Development Community's bold declarations and strategies to eliminate malaria from the African continent, Bill and Melinda Gates challenged the malaria community and called for global malaria eradication.

This call was echoed by Dr Margaret Chan, the Director General of the World Health Organization.

These goals of elimination and ultimate global eradication of malaria are now universally adopted in the Global Malaria Action Plan.

Launched last year by the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, the Global Malaria Action Plan consolidates the input of a wide range of representatives of endemic countries and regions, donor countries, international institutions, experts, the public and private sectors, and civil society.

Let me take this opportunity to recognize all those here present who have contributed to the Global Malaria Action Plan: the SADC Secretariat, the Minister of Health of Zambia who was representing SADC on the RBM Board at the time, members of SARN, the Roll Back Malaria Southern Africa sub-regional network, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, the Clinton Foundation, and the Malaria Elimination Group.

The Global Malaria Action Plan is the single global plan of action - a blueprint for success - that helps all partners to coordinate their efforts to control, eliminate, and one day, eradicate malaria.

Today we have a number of groups ensuring that these ambitions are realized. I congratulate the South African Development Community, the Global Health Group, led by Sir Richard Feachem, the Clinton Foundation, and others, for creating such a high level focus, and spurring action, on malaria elimination.

We now have a formidable task ahead of us: that of putting in place effective action and coordination mechanisms.

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have an additional challenge. The tools available today cannot support malaria elimination in high transmission zones. Malaria elimination therefore requires a globally coordinated and stepped up research effort to develop new tools.

For this reason a new research initiative, the Malaria Eradication Research Agenda, or MALERA, has been launched. MALERA will develop a global Research and Development agenda to support malaria elimination and eradication.

Excellencies, I would like to commend the long-term vision that informs the Elimination Eight initiative.

With your extraordinary leadership, increased funding, long-term planning, and the coordination of multi-sectoral and international efforts, we can achieve our ambitions.

Together, we can improve the health, economic prospects, and overall well-being, of billions of people across Africa and the world.

Thank you.