

Remarks by the WHO Representative, Dr Anshu Banerjee, on behalf of the UN Agencies on the occasion of World Malaria Day, 24 April 2011, Friendship Hall, Khartoum.

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Sudan, President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir,
Your Excellency Minister of Health, Dr ElSadiq Gismalleh,
Your Excellencies Walis,
Your Excellencies State Ministers of Health,
Your Excellencies Ambassadors,
Representatives of UN agencies,
Representatives from the NGO community,
Representatives from the Private sector,
Dear Community Representatives,
Distinguished guests,

Salaam Aleikum

It is a pleasure to participate today in the commemoration of the 4th World Malaria Day which has as its theme “Achieving Progress and Impact” and announces the international community's renewed effort to make progress towards its goal of zero malaria deaths by 2015.

Malaria control is a global priority as it is one of the biggest killers in children under 5 and it is one of the targets within the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. I would like to congratulate the Government of Sudan and in particular the Federal Ministry of Health and the National Malaria Control Programme in the achievements made over the last few years. As mentioned in the “Millennium Development Goal Progress Report of 2010”, there is a remarkable reduction of 60% in estimated malaria cases from 2001 to 2010 and an even greater reduction of 75% in deaths. This has been achieved through:

- ensuring the uninterrupted availability of free diagnosis and free treatment with artemisinin based combination therapy in more than 4,300 health facilities;
- the distribution of long lasting insecticide treated bednets. In fact the percentage of households with at least one Insecticide Treated Net (ITNs) has increased from 21% in 2005 to more than 41% in 2009;
- the establishment of the Blue Nile Institute in Gezeira State that provides Masters Courses in Entomology and Vector Control not only for Sudan but also for professionals from the region;
- Integrated Vector Management; and
- by strengthening the capacity of the malaria control staff.

From 2005 up to date the Government allocated more than 40 million USD for malaria control and was further supported financially by the Global Fund with a total value of 71 million USD. The Global Fund has committed to support Sudan with approximately an additional 147 million USD in the next few years. Furthermore, support was provided by UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO, and NGOs to the National Malaria Control Programme in implementing some of these activities.

However, the “Millennium Development Goal Progress Report of 2010” mentions that malaria infection was higher in rural areas compared to urban areas and among individuals in the lowest income quintile compared to those in the highest quintile.

It is therefore important that the tremendous national commitment towards malaria control is further strengthened, also to prevent the rise of drug resistance and of insecticide resistance as this will result in losing our weapons in the fight against malaria. It is therefore of utmost importance that malaria cases are laboratory confirmed and that the right treatment is prescribed and fully taken. In fact, the 1st regional training on monitoring drug efficacy will be conducted in Sudan in July. Also, in order to ensure that children do not suffer from other preventable diseases it is important that this commitment extends to the immunization programme and other prevention strategies. Today coincides with the launch of the Regional Vaccination Week under the slogan "Partnership for Immunization".

In conclusion I would like to reaffirm the UN's commitment to support the Government of Sudan in their efforts to control malaria and to protect the health of the Sudanese people, in particular their children and pregnant women. This support is not limited to malaria control but all interventions that will enable the government to reach the Millennium Development Goals such as immunization, safe deliveries and other prevention activities.

Sukran Gezeilan