



For Immediate Release
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WORLD MALARIA DAY COMMEMORATION

- AYGF Joins the World to Mark the 2023 Malaria Day
- Reached About One Million People with Malaria-fighting Tools
- Commend the Nigerian Government's Approval of Malaria Vaccine

Consider a world where every 30 seconds, a child dies from a disease that could be prevented and cured. Sadly, this was the reality not too long ago, where every half-minute marked the loss of a young life to malaria.

Today 25th April, the World marks Malaria Day with the Theme: “**Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement**”, Africa Youth Growth Foundation (AYGF) is bringing attention to the severe impact of malaria on families, communities, and overall societal development. Malaria is particularly devastating in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it has significant social and economic consequences.

The latest World Malaria Report, again confirmed the Continent of Africa as home to 95% of malaria cases and 96% of malaria deaths. More worrisome is that children under 5 accounted for around 80% of all malaria deaths. Nigeria accounted for 31% of global malaria deaths the same period, resulting in 191,890 lives lost, contributing to the 619,000 estimated number of malaria deaths in the continent, which carries a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden.

While progress has been made in expanding access to malaria services for at-risk populations, too many people are still not receiving the services they need to prevent, detect, and treat the disease. This is compounded by various challenges, including the

COVID-19 pandemic, conflict imposed humanitarian crises, funding gaps, weak surveillance systems, and declining effectiveness of malaria-fighting tools.

To address some of these challenges, AYGf is establishing more robust malaria programs in Katsina, Kogi, and Niger States, covering over 2,000 communities and reaching approximately one million individuals, including pregnant women and children. AYGf's intervention, supported by the World Bank project's Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN), has developed guidance, strategies, and frameworks to enhance the transparency, flexibility, and access to malaria tools.

Through these interventions, AYGf is tackling technical challenges facing malaria implementation, especially the barriers people encounter in accessing quality health services. By bringing malaria commodities closer to where people live and work through primary health care centers in those communities, the cost of care is reduced, and equity is enhanced.

The Nigerian government's approval of a new malaria vaccine from Oxford University, the R21/Matrix-M, is also commendable. The vaccine designed to prevent malaria in children aged 5 to 36 months was manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

We are hopeful that this vaccine and other interventions will soon make malaria a thing of the past in Africa, particularly in Nigeria. AYGf will continue to partner with government of Nigeria and other stakeholders in enhancing quality of health care and deliver zero malaria through investment, innovation and, implementation of people centric malaria interventions.

Dr. Arome Salifu
Executive Director.