

MAPS Project Launch Comprehensive 2012 Plans

Abuja, Nigeria - The Nigeria Malaria Action Program for States (MAPS) Project, in partnership with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP), unveiled its 2012 plans for comprehensive malaria prevention and treatment in Nigeria in a program launch held on December 6 at the International Conference Centre in Abuja.

Over 90% of the population of Nigeria is at risk of malaria, which is the leading cause of death in the country. Malaria contributes to 30% of childhood mortality and 11% of maternal mortality. The NMCP estimates that an average of 30 children die each hour from malaria-related illnesses in Nigeria.

Dr. Muhammad Ali Pate, Honorable Minister of State for Health, delivered the event's keynote address, while the official launch of the project was announced by the United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Terence McCulley.

"We are privileged to have one of the strongest partnerships in malaria in Africa," remarked Honorable Minister Dr. Pate. "The partnership has provided considerable support for all the intervention areas in malaria control and for this I express my appreciation and gratitude on behalf of his Excellency, Mr. President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and the good people of Nigeria."

He continued, "That said, there are still considerable challenges containing the misery and scourge of malaria in Nigeria. Our generation must bring an end to this misery. Together we can achieve it."

MAPS is made possible by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which is providing the project with funding of nearly \$80 million towards malaria eradication in Nigeria over a span of five years.

The event was also attended by about 180 notable officials with federal and state Ministries of Health, the NMCP, women's organizations, media, and other top functionaries and diplomats from the states of Abuja, Benue, Cross River, Ebonyi, Oyo, Nasarawa, and Zamfara, where the project currently operates.

Among those endorsing the NMCP and MAPS, goodwill messages were received from Honourable Moses Ucheche, Chairman on the Cross River House Committee on Health; His Royal Highness Alhaji Isa Mustapha Agawai the 1st, Emir of Lafiya in Nasarawa; Honourable Kabiru Mohammed Janyau, Zamfara Commissioner of Health; and the wife of the Governor of Benue State, Arc Dooshima Suswan.

The overarching strategy of the 2012 MAPS plan is to cover target populations by concentrating main activities at local ward and village levels to support malaria control interventions in the communities, linking them with health facilities through community health extension workers. Upward linkages and referrals to secondary health facilities will also be strengthened in tandem with support to other activities at state levels.

The Government of Nigeria itself has adopted a multi-pronged malaria control strategy that includes protection against mosquito bites, prompt treatment of malaria cases, and the provision of intermittent preventive therapy to pregnant women.

MAPS is managed by FHI 360 in collaboration with its partners, Malaria Consortium and Health Partners International. MAPS supports the NMCP through initiatives to increase the quality, access, and uptake of specific malaria control interventions, including long lasting insecticidal nets (LLIN) demand creation campaigns, artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs), expanded use of rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs), and the delivery of intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp) to pregnant women.

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