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Africans Urge Congress to Fulfill DDT Promise to Fight Malaria

Written By: Staff of Africa Fighting Malaria
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Africa Fighting Malaria, a public policy organization dedicated to educating people about the scourge of malaria, submitted a letter on January 22 to U.S. Sens. Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) and Thad Cochran (R-MS), chairman and ranking member, respectively, of the Senate Appropriations Committee, requesting the approval of proposed 2007 funding for bilateral and multilateral malaria control programs for Africa, including the President's Malaria Initiative and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. The letter was endorsed by more than 50 public policy groups.

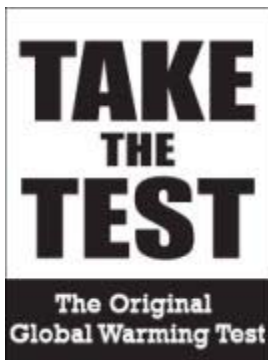
Dear Chairman Byrd and Ranking Member Cochran:

We fully understand that you face significant challenges in finalizing the FY 2007 appropriations process and setting budget priorities for the year ahead. Nonetheless, we hope very much that you will consider increased funding for bilateral and multilateral malaria control programs as a priority, and strongly encourage you to do so.

Malaria kills over a million people each year and hinders economic, cognitive, and social development. It is the single biggest killer of African children, yet more resources and attention are devoted to fighting the disease now than ever before. We urge you to support the Senate's funding level of \$234 million for bilateral malaria programs, which includes \$135 million for the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) in 2007.

In 2006, the PMI launched efforts in Angola, Tanzania, and Uganda to successfully scale up malaria control measures. In Angola, an indoor residual spraying program that began in December 2005 had provided protection for 555,000 people by the end of March 2006. In Uganda, the PMI procured over 290,000 pediatric doses of Artemisinin-based combination treatment drugs for free distribution as part of Uganda's home-based management of fever program in the IDP camps in northern Uganda.

In Tanzania, beginning in mid-December 2005, the PMI distributed 130,000 long-lasting bed-nets, more than doubling the coverage rates of pregnant women and children on Zanzibar and Pemba Island. The number of confirmed malaria cases on Pemba Island dropped 87 percent from January to September 2006 to 1,570--down from 12,531 over the same period [in 2005], according to local health reports.

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In total, these activities protected an estimated 6 million people from malaria. With \$135 million in FY2007, the PMI will be able to protect an additional 30 million people in these three countries and four new ones: Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Senegal.

President Bush and the First Lady recently hosted a White House Summit on Malaria to galvanize public-private partnerships, grassroots and community efforts for this initiative. Various global public health leaders, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Dr. Margaret Chan, new head of the World Health Organization, Melinda Gates of the Gates Foundation, Paul Wolfowitz, head of the World Bank, several African Health Ministers, and numerous celebrities participated and committed their support to the PMI. A new network called Malaria No More was created specifically to build on the momentum generated by this event and the PMI's success in 2006.

As a result, the U.S. political commitment to fighting malaria is tremendous and unprecedented. It is critical at this stage that the financial commitment is equally tremendous. The PMI must receive the full requested funding of \$135 million for FY2007 to sustain and build upon these efforts in the recipient countries.

Success will be measured by the extent to which recipient countries can sustain the programs our resources and expertise are helping to build. This will not be possible without the ongoing commitment of both the House and Senate to work on a bipartisan basis to provide full funding for goals that are ambitious, but also vitally important and wholly achievable. Malaria is a preventable and curable disease.

In addition to PMI, the USAID in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires \$99 million to continue and expand upon current malaria control measures. This figure includes research and development of new drugs, preventive tools and a vaccine, as well as technical assistance to recipient countries and preparation activities in eight countries that the President proposed to include in the PMI in 2008.

Further, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria is a critically important partner to the U.S. in efforts to control and eradicate malaria. The Global Fund currently provides about a third of all resources for malaria control globally, and works side-by-side with the PMI, USAID and the CDC to provide effective malaria control measures to recipient countries.

In all your deliberations on FY2007 appropriations, we urge you to maintain the Senate level of \$600 million for the Global Fund. Combined with an additional \$100 million in the Labor-HHS bill, the total U.S. contribution to the Global Fund would be \$700 million in FY 2007.

In sum, we hope that as you consider the final FY 2007 appropriations for Foreign Operations, you will succeed in defending the Senate's funding level of \$234 million for bilateral malaria programs, including the PMI, and \$700 million in total for the Global Fund. Working together, the U.S. and the Global Fund can help save countless lives of those most at risk from this deadly, yet preventable, disease.

Sincerely,
Africa Fighting Malaria

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