

Welcome Remarks and Overview by H.E. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
President of the Republic of Liberia  
And Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA)  
At ALMA Forum/African Union Summit  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
15 July 2012

Excellencies;  
Colleagues;  
Ladies and Gentleman:

Let me begin by welcoming all of you to this meeting of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, here in Addis Ababa. Our time is short, and the agenda full, so we'll get started.

As we discussed in January, there has been unprecedented success in scaling up malaria control, with a 33 percent decrease in malaria deaths in Africa over the last decade. However, the current global funding crisis threatens the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including those related to malaria, and there is a risk that the significant gains we've made over the last few years will be lost unless we act decisively and now.

Our national malaria control programs are working to finalize comprehensive programmatic and financial gap analyses,<sup>1</sup> but preliminary data indicate that there is a gap of US\$3.2 billion in the finances needed to sustain universal coverage of essential malaria interventions to the end of 2015 in Africa.

Also in January, ALMA Heads of State and Government recommended a way forward. So today we will review and refine our progress to date on the big push to achieve zero preventable deaths by 2015. President Kaberuka of the African Development Bank will update us on African countries' progress on the malaria goals, and the additional resources that can be leveraged to close these gaps.

You will recall that we asked the United Nations Secretary-General, working with the African Union, to convene a financing conference later this year to

bring together the world's financial leaders to address the gap in funding for Malaria, HIV/AIDS, TB, and Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has sent his MDG Advocate & Special Envoy for Malaria to provide an update. The General Manager of the Global Fund is here to give an update on the transformation at the Fund and

what that means for our countries. The World Bank has been a very important partner in the progress to date, and the new President of the Bank, Mr. Jim Kim,<sup>ii</sup> is here to talk about increasing technical support to countries and how we are using IDA 16 to fund health.

From the ALMA Secretariat, I am very pleased to announce that we developed and launched an app for iPad to facilitate communication between the Secretariat and member countries. At the World Health Assembly in May, the ALMA Secretariat distributed 44 iPads to our Ministers of Health and trained them on how to use it. You will notice that we have stations set up around the room, and some of today's speakers will use the app to present the relevant materials which you can see on the screens around the room.

You will recall that last year, at our request, the Secretariat developed the ALMA Scorecard for Accountability and Action. In January, we added the Abuja target of 15 percent national public sector financing – health as a percentage of total government expenditure – to the ALMA Scorecard for Accountability and Action. In addition to tracking our existing domestic allocations, we will work towards identifying new sources of funding, such as domestic private sector. Several of us committed to introducing innovative financing in the form of airline taxes in our countries, but have still to implement this. We look to the World Bank, ADB and other partners to work with us on sustained financing, including the introduction and/or strengthening of health insurance schemes.

Lastly, some exciting news for us football fans. After the meeting, I will host a brief press conference with Samuel Eto'o, Captain of the Cameroon National Football Team, to announce a partnership between ALMA, the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) and United Against Malaria (UAM). We are seeking to pair African Heads of State and top footballers in Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to raise malaria awareness across the continent. The PSAs will be shown in our countries and during the AFCON finals next January and February 2013.

We'll begin our program with remarks from our distinguished host, His Excellency Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

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<sup>i</sup>Updated gap analyses data will be available before the ALMA Forum at the African Union Summit.

<sup>ii</sup> Mr. Kim has been invited. If he cannot attend, he will send Mr. Makhtar Diop, Vice President Africa Region.