

**Statement by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,
Incoming Chair, African Leaders Malaria Alliance
At ALMA Forum, Addis Ababa,
January 30, 2012**

President Jakaya Kikwete, Outgoing Chair of ALMA;
Colleagues;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am sure you will agree with me that we have had an excellent Chair over the past two years, in the person of President Kikwete. It is an honor for me to succeed him to the Chair of this most important ALMA Forum.

All of us gathered here know that malaria is a serious development threat to our continent and our people. I concur with President Kikwete that our countries are making tremendous progress in the fight against malaria, but that we still have a long way to go. The remarkable gains that you have described are all fragile.

The current global funding crisis, as exemplified by the postponement of Round 11 of the Global Fund, threatens to roll back these fragile achievements, as well as the gains made in fighting HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

This funding crisis could lead to significant increases in malaria cases and deaths, and a serious reversal of the gains achieved. We estimate a gap of US\$3.3 billion in the finances needed to sustain universal coverage of essential malaria interventions, including ACTs, RDTs and LLINs to the end of 2015. There is a moral and economic imperative to fill this gap.

We are here today to discuss and agree on a way forward to address this challenge and ensure our health and development gains are not lost.

We can meet this challenge in several ways:

- Work with our partners to honor their commitments to making available funding from traditional sources;
- Re-evaluate our priorities under the World Bank's IDA, now that a major funder is temporarily out of the picture;
- Work together to attract new donors, such as BRIC countries, increase domestic funding, and explore innovative financing options. Our domestic funding must actively engage the private sector as a critical development partner.

All country implementing partners, led by us, the governments, have a responsibility to enhance accountability and results to ensure national and international confidence in our efficient and effective use of resources.

We will hear today how ALMA countries are already addressing these challenges to ensure our gains are not lost. I am sure that at the end of the day, we will have a clear action plan that describes the way forward to sustain universal coverage of malaria interventions, ensuring that we remain on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Goal #6.

I am convinced that if national and international stakeholders work together in a spirit of collaboration that is, first and foremost, guided by the will to save lives, while maximizing efficiency and effectiveness, the challenges we face are not insurmountable. Malaria threatens all of humanity. Our mission is not just African owned and African driven, it belongs to the world!