

## 71st Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa

**Author:** Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV)

**Agenda item:** 18.1, Progress report on the framework for implementing the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030 in the African Region

### **Statement:**

Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) would like to comment on the information document for agenda item 18.1: Progress report on the framework for implementing the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030 in the African Region.

MMV is a not-for-profit product development partnership devoted to developing and facilitating access to lifesaving antimalarials; we accomplish our work by catalyzing, coordinating, and co-executing research and product development activities and access efforts with academic, industry and implementing partners. This is particularly important for Africa, which still accounts for 94% of the 229 million malaria cases and 409,000 malaria deaths reported globally every year, despite significant improvements in morbidity and mortality over the last 15 years.

Since the launch of the WHO Global Technical Strategy, several successes in the antimalarial drug space have helped transform the prevention and treatment of malaria and saved millions of lives. These innovations include seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC), new sources of quality-assured intermittent preventive treatments in pregnancy (IPTp) and improved tools for managing the continuum of care for severe malaria in children in rural settings. In addition, two stringent regulators have approved in 2018 the first single-dose radical cure for *P. vivax*, which is a health challenge in the Horn of Africa, representing a major improvement over the current 14-day standard of care for this indication.

Since 2009, 13 malaria therapies which have been brought forward with research and industry partners have saved an estimated 2.7 million lives worldwide. These results were achieved also thanks to crucial partnerships with a large network of African researchers.

Collaborations with African researchers and industries in which MMV is currently involved include:

1. The largest real life (Phase IV) study to date of Pyramax® (pyronaridine-artesunate) for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria, which was conducted in partnership with the Central Africa Network on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria (CANTAM) and the University of Agboville in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the phase IIIb/IV safety and efficacy study in West Africa (WANECAM) over four years to increase the availability of real-life safety data after repeat dosing.
2. Launch of pregnancy registries in three African countries to capture safety and exposure data on the real-life use of artemisinin-combination therapies during all stages of pregnancy, to support policy change through robust data, thereby improving treatment options for pregnant women suffering from malaria.
3. Partnerships with African manufacturers to support the production of WHO-prequalified sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine for intermittent preventive treatment of malaria in pregnant women
4. In support of efforts to repurpose malaria medicines against COVID-19 and meet the needs of low-resource settings, a partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, to initiate a Phase II exploratory study to assess the safety and efficacy of four different anti-infective drugs compared to standard of care in adults with mild COVID-19 infection.

Malaria is a disease which can be treated successfully or prevented with medicines – but these efforts must be embedded in larger integrated strategies that include improved vector control, routine use of diagnostics, and concomitant investment in primary health care systems and referral mechanisms for higher levels of care. Such investment is essential to expand access to malaria interventions for the most impacted populations, including children and pregnant women.

MMV remains fully committed to contributing its extensive skills, capabilities and networks for ongoing and future collaborations with governments and research communities throughout Africa, as well as to continuing to support the strengthening of national and regional sources of pharmaceutical production on the continent.