

20 April 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Commemoration of World Malaria Day**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you to commemorate this year's World Malaria Day. I thank the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership for hosting this important gathering, and commend the World Health Organization for their commitment towards malaria elimination.

The theme for this year's commemoration, "Invest in the future, Defeat Malaria" is both important and progressive. It recognises our collective aspirations towards eradicating malaria and its effects on society.

**Excellencies,**

We have made a great deal of progress since the first World Malaria Day in 2007. Through the global community's outstanding efforts, the third target of MDG 6 – halting and reversing the incidence of malaria — has been met in many countries.

According to the World Health Organisation, malaria mortality rates have fallen by 47% globally since 2000 and by 54% in the Africa region.

Overall, reductions in malaria deaths have contributed substantially to progress towards achieving the first target of MDG 4 – reducing, by two thirds, the under-5 mortality rate.

Although these are important accomplishments, we still have a long way to go. Further efforts must be made to combat malaria, particularly with regard to the incidence among children. Estimates indicate that malaria claims the lives of 453,000 children per year, with 90% of those deaths taking place in Africa.

Malaria is also an impediment to development, with lasting impacts on the health, education, and job opportunities of affected individuals and families.

We must address our efforts to the emerging, yet troubling trend of malaria's resistance to existing drugs. This could impede progress toward the total its elimination, positioning it as a long-term threat for some of the most vulnerable communities.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The United Nations, for its part, has worked to keep the threat of malaria prominent on the international agenda as a leading health and development issue.

In regions where health care systems are fragile and providing basic services is a challenge, it is imperative that the international community take further steps to bolster health care delivery.

As witnessed during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, many countries' basic health services remain vulnerable and when resources are diverted, the ability to control and implement core malaria interventions suffers.

As a result of the lessons learned from the Ebola crisis, there is increased recognition of the critical importance of strong, resilient health care systems. Greater investment in this sector can help close the coverage gap, support disease surveillance and research, while making responses to malaria and other diseases more effective.

Policies and processes must be put into place to ensure regional and cross-border collaboration, while information and knowledge must be freely exchanged between partners to strengthen efficiencies and maximize impact.

Together, we have made huge strides in our efforts to combat this preventable and treatable disease. Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done to achieve a world free of malaria. To reach our goals, we must have continued investments and sustained political commitments for malaria control and elimination.

I look forward to our next steps in this important global effort and thank you for your attention.