

MOSQUITO NET DISTRIBUTION

A total of 19,160,875 mosquito nets have been distributed countrywide, surpassing the campaign's target of 85%

By Vision Reporter

President Yoweri Museveni has directed all district medical officers to maximise their efforts in the eradication of malaria. He said there should be mass action by all stakeholders, including all households and communities in the eradication of malaria.

"Malaria affects the health of our people. It is a disease of the poor and it is also a cause of poverty. Malaria causes illness, cripples and kills. Prevention of this disease is very important. It is a big constraint to economic development. In 2017, nine million people were infected and 5,100 died," he said.

Museveni was speaking in Kabwohe municipality, Sheema district in southwestern Uganda, as he officially closed the "sleep under a mosquito net campaign". Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda launched the countrywide campaign in Apac district in February last year.

For several decades, malaria has been the leading cause of sickness and death in Uganda, claiming over 150 lives daily. Efforts by the Government in partnership with donors to combat the disease through the increased access and use of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets among the population presents a ray of hope.

Interventions for a malaria-free country

The sleep under a mosquito net campaign has been concluded in the districts of Bundibugyo, Kagadi and Kasese in the western region as well as Mbarara and Sheema in southwest. A total of 19,160,875 nets have been distributed in all the districts, surpassing its target of 85%.

President Museveni called on all wananchi (citizens) to stop using mosquito nets to make wedding gowns and fish nets. He observed that indoor residual spraying was not well done. He, therefore, tasked the health ministry with ensuring that spraying is implemented for the welfare of all the people. He observed that the annual economic growth has been lower in the malaria-affected countries than that of the malaria-free ones.

He said in 2004, Uganda changed the treatment of malaria and in 2006, the Government provided artemether and other related drugs free-of-charge. Museveni said the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government is committed to ensuring that Uganda is a malaria-free country. He directed the health ministry to provide bicycles to the

President orders district medical officers on malaria



West Ankole Diocese Bishop John Twinomujuni (right) prays after President Yoweri Museveni (second-left) laid the foundation stone for the proposed BMC Hospital in Kabwohe, Sheema district on Saturday. PPU photo



Ambassador Deborah Malac

DONOR SUPPORT

Malac said the US has been giving mosquito nets and will remain committed to ensuring Uganda is malaria-free

5,000 parish chiefs in the country in order to enable them monitor the effective utilisation of the free mosquito nets in the homes.

Museveni called on residents to go for prompt treatment as part of the measures to arrest the spread of malaria. He said the ministries of health and agriculture were already working jointly to administer larvicides in valley dams in order to prevent the breeding of malaria-causing mosquitoes

The President thanked the donors, especially the US and Global Fund, for supporting the efforts of the Government to eradicate malaria. He also called on Sheema residents to become pioneers in the eradication of household poverty.

He pledged support to the various commercial ventures that are being undertaken by wananchi in Sheema as he presented a mosquito net to a seven-year-old boy, one to an old man and

another to an old woman.

Children safe under mosquito nets

The state minister for health, Sarah Opendi, said the malaria campaign was launched in 2009 and that to-date, over 80% of the population has been covered. She said economic stagnation was partly caused by malaria infections.

The US ambassador to Uganda, Deborah Malac, said her country has supported Uganda in the provision of mosquito nets and in 2016, children under five years had been shielded from malaria attack through the distribution of nets. The envoy said the US remains committed to ensuring a malaria-free Uganda.

The director of Malaria Consortium for eastern and southern Africa, Dr Godfrey Magumba, expressed happiness about the progress Uganda has registered in the distribution of mosquito nets.

Sheema district LC5 Chairperson Can. David Babigumira saluted Museveni for his effort in fighting malaria.