

Protect malaria gains – US envoy

BUTALEJA

By Faustine Odeke

US ambassador to Uganda Deborah Malac has challenged Ugandans to jealously protect the significant gains made in the fight against malaria in the country.

Malac also called on the Government to be prepared to take charge and consolidate the malaria fight, adding that her government will always extend any necessary support to see total elimination of malaria in Africa.

"For the last 35 years I have worked in Africa, most countries are faced with major challenges of the malaria burden, which impact negatively on children, women and the labour force. We need to consolidate the current achievements," she said.

The ambassador made the remarks while addressing the community of Mazimaza sub-county in Butaleja on Wednesday, where she has been on a fact-finding mission to assess the impact of indoor residual spraying and distribution of mosquito nets.

She visited homes and interacted with residents.

The programme, is being supported by the US government under the Presidential Malaria Initiative, United States Aid for International Development (USAID) and United Kingdom Aid for International Development (UKAID).

Malac was impressed to note that the programme has made significant progress in the reduction of the incidences of malaria to nearly zero.



Malac speaking to a pupil in Butaleja district. She visited homes on a fact-finding mission. Photo by Faustine Odeke

She appealed to the community members to continue sleeping under mosquito nets.

Robert Sagula, the LCI chairman of Muhumbania village, said malaria has been a burden to the Government, which spends a lot of money procuring drugs.

He added that the disease had also affected productivity among communities.

Sagula noted that since

the launch of the malaria programme in 2014, they have not registered any case where a community member has died of malaria.

"The female anopheles mosquito has been eliminated, every household has received long lasting nets and other crawling insects have been eliminated in their household," he said.

The women told Malac that they no longer experience

cases of miscarriages as a result of malaria.

The acting district health officer, Dr Ivan Mukasa, said malaria prevalence has tremendously reduced from 61% to 21% since the programme was introduced.

Mukasa said the programme has registered overall malaria case reduction by 67%, improved school attendance by 41% as a result of reduction

in mobility and increased productivity, which will be key in improving household income.

He said as a district, they are committed to sustaining preventive and control measures of malaria in communities through the village health team structure, by sensitising people about using mosquito nets, clearing bushes and stagnant waters around their homes and

asking mothers to attend antenatal care.

The district chairman, Richard Waya, said they are closely monitoring the progress of the programme and are doing all it takes to ensure its sustainability.

The resident district commissioner, Richard Baliaano Gulume, thanked the American government for its intervention, especially their focus on prevention.