

# UK announces sh215b in new anti-malaria funding

By Pascal Kwesiga

Inside the Rwenzori ballroom of Sheraton Kampala Hotel, four-year-old Leonard Oteng playfully walked around the hall and greeted people as the meeting to announce the end of the second phase of the Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) was getting underway.

When his mother, Florence Awilo, a resident of Otuke district, was invited to deliver a testimony before development partners and health professionals about the success of the five-year IRS project, she said her son had a message for the audience before she handed him a microphone.

"Dear parents, mind about us, we need medical care, clothes. We need mosquito nets...together we can control malaria. I say this for God and

my country," Oteng stated during the meeting at the hotel in Kampala yesterday.

Had it not been for IRS, Oteng would not have probably been able to make the over 300km trip from Otuke to Kampala together with his mother for he suffered frequent bouts of malaria before.

"He would be attacked by malaria after every three months, and I could not do anything productive for the family. I was worried and I could not perform my duties well, but he has not suffered from malaria for a year now," Awilo, a teacher at Acane Primary School in Otuke, said.

Her family of five, including a husband and their three children, is among 1.2 million households (3.8 million people) who have benefited from the IRS second phase in

## BETWEEN THE LINES:

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eastern and northern Uganda, according to the health ministry.

Awilo reported that enrollment at Acane Primary School has increased from 478 to 670 children during the IRS implementation.

"School attendance has improved from 40% to 60% because there are no longer many children missing school because of malaria," she added.

Approximately one million children and over 100,000

pregnant women have been protected from malaria under IRS.

"Reported malaria cases declined by nearly 45% since 2013 from about 16 million to 8.8 million. The testing rate for suspected malaria cases has risen to 88%, and nearly 87% of children diagnosed with malaria have accessed proper treatment," the US deputy chief of mission in Uganda, Colette Marcellin, said.

The ministry reported that UK and the US through the Department for International Development (DFID) and USAID have invested over \$81m in the IRS second phase since 2012. However, Uganda started implementing IRS around 2006, beginning with districts in southwestern Uganda before moving to the northern and eastern regions

with high malaria burden.

Uganda has one of the highest malaria prevalence rates in the world, with an estimated 17,000 people succumbing to the mosquito transmitted disease related causes, according to the 2013 World Health Organisation malaria report.

According to the 2014 malaria indicator survey, the northern region has the highest malaria prevalence rates followed by eastern region and pockets of central Uganda. It is the leading cause of death in the country, with over 400 out of each 1,000 suffering from the disease.

At the yesterday's meeting, the UK government announced another funding package worth \$59m (sh215b) to continue to support IRS in the 14 districts in the northern

and eastern region where its second phase has ended. It is expected that by December, the implementation plan for the next IRS will be ready for the UK to release the funds.

The UKaid/Department of International Development boss in Uganda, Jennie Barugh, said malaria attacks have significant impact on people's incomes and livelihoods. It is estimated a Ugandan spends sh25,000 to reach each episode of malaria.

"While we have made progress, much more remains to be done. The Government needs to look for domestic financing to combat malaria," Barugh said.

Dr Jimmy Opigo, the malaria control programme manager, said vector control officers and other health professionals have been trained under IRS.

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