

## **Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference: Opening Ceremony November 14, 2005**

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[START RECORDING]

[Dropped audio]

**MALE SPEAKER:** [Inaudible], thank you for taking on the national anthem. I would like invite the government delegate to the Yaounde Urban Council to speak as well.

**GILBERT TSIMI EVOUNA:** [Speaking]

**INTERPRETER:** Excellent in defining to—my compliments—minister of [interposing], minister of [interposing] education, the minister of scientific research and innovation, members of governments—members of—of international organizations—eminent personalities, scientists, eminent—eminent personalities of the Civil Society and further sectors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It's an honor for me to [interposing]—at this opening solemn ceremony—of two important conferences—international conferences—in the conference center.

First of all, the Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference—which was developed by the World Malaria Forum 5—I have honor the first, in which I've been pleased [inaudible] His Excellency, [inaudible] presenter Yaounde, Cameroon. Kindly allow me to [inaudible] head of governments, to say how much we are honored by your presence at this opening ceremony adventure on behalf of the Head of State, we are personally [inaudible].

Your presence here is further testimony—important to reach His Excellency for the African Republic and the

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[inaudible] governments—attack problems of public health in general and to fight against [inaudible] malaria, in particular. I'm talking about fight against malaria [inaudible], which, unfortunately, continues to cause deaths in the houses.

I'd like to express the satisfaction of the people who highly appreciate the action of governments and of local activities to win this fight against malaria, and further the sensitization [inaudible] hygiene and sanitation [inaudible] and distribution of insecticide [interposing]. All these actions, of which we have every reason to be proud, show that our country is visibly at the forefront of the fight against malaria.

Ladies and gentlemen, accepting [interposing] the most strong determination to mobilize yourselves and to better arm yourselves against this war against malaria. This fight should be [dropped audio] financial outreach.

Considering the quality of scientist [dropped audio] outcomes of the conference. We would like to show you distinguished men of science [dropped audio] I would like to show the conference successive deliberations. I would [dropped audio] announce the fight against malaria. Thank you.

[Applause]

**MALE SPEAKER:** Minister of Health will take the floor.

**URBAIN OLANGUENA AWONO:** [Speaking]

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**INTERPRETER:** [Interposing] Prime Minister, Ministers of [interposing], Excellencies, Ministers—Your Excellencies—[interposing] of international organizations—[interposing] government [inaudible], distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, all who are concerned with malaria: [Interposing] the solemn ceremony of the Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference. [Interposing] November [inaudible] Forum 5.

This meeting—it is a sign of honor to come to you in Cameroon. It also shows permission of the political [inaudible] of the presence of the Republic, and also, the many actions of the government to fight malaria. [Interposing] to take the floor and express and join in welcoming or hosting this great conference. Excellency [interposing] governments, your presence at this ceremony [interposing] shows the determination of commitment of the [interposing] in the fight against malaria.

This disease is an epidemic in our country and it affects 2 million people every year. It is the first cause of immobility and mortality in Cameroon. [Interposing] 40 to 50 percent of medical consultations, [interposing] percent of hospitalization, 40 percent of government and household budgets, and then, resistance to insecticides and resistance of [inaudible] to treatments.

Malaria is the number one public health problem in Cameroon and the first enemy of child under five years old.

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**Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference:  
Opening Ceremony  
11/14/05**

5

Under the narratives of the [interposing] public, the government has turned up its program to fight against malaria in the spirit of the [inaudible] Declaration in 2000 [interposing].

The fight against malaria has gained [interposing], have increased our options, and through the implication and apartments of many Africans, community doctors, and local activities, churches, international departments, financial departments, the media, and men of science. [Inaudible] which has good research on it—center of option. That is why we had honor and pleasure to host this meeting, which has brought together more than 1,500 participants, some of whom [interposing] distinguished participants.

The local organizing committee, which has been working over many months, is available to you to make this conference nothing but pleasurable to create indulgence for any shortcomings, which we may define, to urge you whatever might be our [inaudible]. All those who have been working toward the MIM conference [inaudible] Secretariat [inaudible] malaria, the various administrations, the various agencies, I would like to thank Professor Wilfred Mbacham and Dr. Rafael Okala [misspelled?] of Cameroon, as well as the [inaudible] from Geneva and [inaudible] from Stockholm, who have not spared any influence, surmounts the organization or difficulties which they could have found. I thank all of you. [Applause]

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In conclusion, I would like to say, Ladies and Gentlemen, men and women of science, that it is up to you now to make of this Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference a great rendezvous—a rendezvous of the such in science—science in studies of development. Long live multilateral option, long live multilateral cooperation, long live Cameroon. I thank you for attending. [Applause]

[Dropped audio]

**DR. DOROTHY LIMUNGA NJEUMA:** Your Excellency, Prime Minister, Head of Government of the Republic of Cameroon, Excellencies, members of government, Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Core [misspelled?], conference delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is a great honor and a special privilege for me to speak on behalf of the Local Scientific Secretariat, and on behalf of the University of Yaounde, to welcome all of you to this important meeting on Malaria. We are delighted that you have been able to make time in your busy schedules to travel to this conference so as to meet and to discuss the many challenges that still lie ahead of us in the fight against this ancient [inaudible].

Cameroon, like many other African countries is plagued with an intolerable burden of malaria. And like many other countries, we have taken on the challenge to provide solutions to malaria, albeit, with difficulty. [Speaking not in English]

**INTERPRETER:** Secretariat, [interposing] [inaudible]

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**Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference:  
Opening Ceremony  
11/14/05**

7

University of Stockholm and the government of Sweden for its participation during the years of our partnership of this conference, which has made it possible for us to increase our mutual understanding. I think that we are only consolidating nations that are diseased [inaudible] universities [inaudible] universities, and also, the nations the relations [inaudible].

**DR. DOROTHY LIMUNGA NJEUMA:** [Dropped audio] We wish to congratulate them, especially those of the bio-technologies centers [dropped audio] where the secretariats have been physically launched for their untiring efforts. In fact, we are proud to say that we have some of the finest scientists Africa can boast of and who have defied the hard work in Cameroon. They are members of various boards and fellowship programs, such as WHO's Tropical Disease Research Disability Strengthening, MIM's Task Force, MIM's Anti-malaria Drug Resistance Network, Gates Malaria Partnership. [Speaking not in English.]

**INTERPRETER:** [Interposing] malaria.

**DR. DOROTHY LIMUNGA NJEUMA:** Amaned [misspelled?], the European Malaria Vaccine Initiative, WHO Malaria Vaccine Initiative, the European and developing countries clinical trials platform [dropped audio].

As you might have noticed, our research domains span across policy matters, fundamental and applied molecular bio-sciences of malaria research, as well as operational and

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intervention research. Cameroon's recognition by your attendance at this meeting highlights the efforts in making the research environment conducive to provide practical solutions to the many problems that we face.

This conference has not only attracted some of the major funders [misspelled?] of malaria research, but has also brought together senior researchers, cultural managers, and the next generation of malaria researchers from 64 countries. It provides an opportunity for contact and collaboration to be made to better urge you to take advantage of these opportunities and to forge new partnerships that will include malaria research in this sub-region that has so far been rather under-funded. I welcome you once again to this conference and wish you the best in deliberation. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

**MALE SPEAKER:** I would like to invite the presentation of International Presentation [misspelled?] Malaria. [Dropped audio]

**CHRISTOPH BENN, M.D., M.P.H.:** [Dropped audio] On his behalf, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the organizers of this committee who invited us to this meeting. We are all meeting here [dropped audio] with a common objective, irrespective of our origins [dropped audio]. Thanks to many researches, we know that malaria costs more than \$200 billion, which could be controlled using just a fraction of

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that amount.

Malaria is bad. It is killing many thousand children in Cameroon and entire African countries and continents, which hosts 80 percent of this scourge. [Dropped audio] that the treatment that saves the life of a child is less than \$1. Insecticide treated [dropped audio] costs less than \$4. We now find ourselves [dropped audio].

Serious, deadly, killer disease is continuing to kill [inaudible]. Since we know the solutions, we should now give ourselves the means to [dropped audio] check the disease.

During these last few years, there has been a greater awareness on the international level to fight this scourge creation of the world's former fight-HIV/AIDS and malaria is evidence. [Dropped audio] in national awareness and, also, in generating the political willingness to fight against these diseases. [Dropped audio] international [inaudible] was created in 2001 at the initiative of [inaudible] because of the urgent need to have an instrument that would make it possible to deploy [dropped audio] made it possible for us to have international bonds dedicated to the fight against malaria.

The recent study carried out show that international contributions have increased from \$42 million in 2000 to \$600 million in 2004. Do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that it is only [inaudible] that is responsible for the increase in the funding of malaria. There are many other

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organizations that have increased their participation and have brought considerable needs to fight and [inaudible] fight. One mentioned WHO—well done, UNICEF, and also, many bilateral organizations [inaudible].

Also, there are private foundations, like the Bill Gates Foundation, and the Taltana [misspelled?] Foundation. And therefore, see the joint effort that is [dropped audio]. The Well Fund in 2004 is 45 percent of total outlays to fight against malaria. According to our projections, this proportion [dropped audio] year 2005. The equivalence of this contribution is \$300 million. [Dropped audio]

It will be a moral obligation to all of us to make sure that this knowledge will be available to [dropped audio]. There are already two excellent interventions immediately available for which we do not have to wait, new technical [dropped audio]. The switch from largely ineffective treatment to new combinations is certainly a challenge [dropped audio].

The average treatment cost is considerably higher [dropped audio]. However, many countries, particularly in Africa are ready to make bold decisions to facilitate this shift that should benefit millions of people. The Global Fund has committed resources for 264 million doses of AZT delivered over the five-year life span of supported programs.

Implementation has just started and, no doubt, needs to accelerate. The commitment to deliver more expensive treatment

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on a sustainable basis is not an easy one. We definitely need strong political will and collaboration of all partners to make this happen.

The other innovation that needs to be put into practice is insecticide-treated [dropped audio]. This technology is simple, cheap, and highly effective, particularly in reducing child mortality [misspelled?] So far, the Global Fund has committed to finance 109 million beds with nets over the next few years. This is part of a major effort together with other partners.

The aim should be to provide every family in Africa with a net. It sounds like an ambitious plan, but I'm sure it can be done. We should all commit ourselves to the achievement of this goal that could change the life of African countries.

I would not underestimate for a minute the challenge of these initiatives. I've worked several years as a physician in East Africa in a region where malaria was the most severe health problem for children. I am fully of the need for a basic health infrastructure, of procurement [misspelled?] of hygiene management systems, for trained health workers, and for wide-spread health initiatives.

Money alone cannot solve these problems. It is a prerequisite, but just innovative products—but it takes more—much more than money to make these programs work. We need to better coordinate the work. All too often, programs supported

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by different funding organizations are not well-aligned causing unnecessary duplications and a heavy workload [dropped audio] countries. We're looking forward to close collaboration to combat malaria, individual-initiate a process for improved donor harmonization and better coordination, at entry level, with ministers of health and other stages.

This effort should lead to the achievement of millennium development goals, particularly number six that demands to halt and begin to reverse the incidents of malaria and other major diseases by 2015. Or, more specifically, to reduce malaria in mobility and mortality by 75 percent by 2015 from the current [dropped audio].

So far we have failed. These malaria incidents have not come down since 2000, and a lot of time has been wasted. But we can definitely achieve this goal if we mobilize the political support—for it is not yet sufficient—improve the coordination of our partners, facilitate the high quality technical assistance, apply what we learned from science and the development of innovative products, make sure that additional resources are raised, and reach those who are [dropped audio].

I believe that now there is a window of opportunity. It is open, but we do not know for how long. So let us use this opportunity [dropped audio]. Let us hope that this conference will help determine the fight, that it will be

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remembered as a milestone in the fight against malaria, that it will produce exciting news about progress in research and about practical solutions that will help save millions of lives.

Thank you very much. [Applause]

**MALE SPEAKER:** [Dropped audio] I have the distinguished honor to invite His Excellency, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, Cameroon [dropped audio] to take the floor. [dropped audio] [applause]

**EPHRAIM INONI:** Your Excellencies, Members of Government, Honorable members of the Diplomatic Core, and representatives of international organizations, Madam, Director of the Secretariat of the Fourth MIM Pan-African Conference on Malaria, the government delegate to the Yaounde Urban Council, distinguished members of the Scientific Community, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is a great pleasure and honor for me to be here today for the official opening of the Fourth Pan-African Conference dedicated to malaria research and control organized by the Multinational Initiative on Malaria.

On behalf of the President of the Republic, His Excellency, Paul Biya, the government, and the entire people of Cameroon, I am pleased to express our gratitude to all those who have made this conference a reality. I sincerely thank all of the partners of this conference for their confidence and recognition of Cameroon's efforts and noble fight against malaria and its strong involvement in malaria research.

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We are pleased to play host to this distinguished gathering of the finest minds in malaria research and control. We are meeting this day in Yaounde, [inaudible] Cameroon at the heart of the scientific planning process of the holistic fight against malaria, one of the most impoverishing diseases of our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, malaria continues to be one of the major public hazards and a serious threat to social and economic development in the developing world, in general, and especially in Africa. This pandemic has an enormous toll on the economies of the merging nations, which are struggling to promote sustainable social and human development. In this regard, we have to rely on research for the discovery of new technologies for prevention and effective treatment.

We also need appropriate mechanisms to translate as quickly as possible these research results into effective application to tackle the deadly disease while waiting for a vaccine against malaria. Making these tools readily accessible to children and pregnant women is the way the international communication acts to help the most vulnerable brackets of our society.

During this conference, pertinent issues, such as translation of scientific discovery into policy, research for a vaccine against malaria, new drugs and new preventive methods against malaria will be discussed. I salute and sincerely

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congratulate all of you, [inaudible] researcher who worked hard to make this happen.

We are, also, going to discuss recent progress regarding new treatment, the biology of the malaria parasite, better understanding of human habits, and the best ways of bringing the much-needed effective, preventive, and therapeutic to the most needy and vulnerable populations. It will, thus, enkindle hope for our population, particularly to millions of children and pregnant women suffering and dying of malaria.

As you well know, investing in research is a very expensive [inaudible]. I, therefore, urge the international partners to support this effort.

Permit me, at this venture, to thank the Morton [inaudible] research of malaria and the World Health Organization, again, the Malaria Partnership at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the new SA National Institute of Health for supporting research, capacity building in Africa, rendering it possible for Africans to [inaudible] to become key activists in this strategic event, which is the fight against malaria.

Ladies and gentlemen, as serious as it is as a major threat, [inaudible] development, the President of the Republic of Cameroon has pledged to fight against malaria at the top of our national agenda. The national strategic event emphasizing on prevention and the care was developed five years ago as an

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important parameter to National Policy Performance Alleviation. This plan is being implemented with special focus on prevention of infection in mothers and children through intravenous vaccine for pregnant women and the provision of insecticide research [inaudible] free of charge.

The overall implementation of our plan using a community based and a results-oriented approach has been reinforced, thanks to additional funds granted Cameroon by the Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

The entire world is engaged in the battle against malaria. These battles have to be [inaudible]. Apart from prevention, care, and treatment that worthy and equally important to promote and support research as a whole in order to generate new traditions to battle the pandemic. Our conviction is that public health policies should include research as a priority and not as a subsidiary area of progress when planning national health care development as research remain a key factor to better the future.

With-in this framework, the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency, Paul Biya, and the entire government of Cameroon are giving due recognition to research. We are a ministry in charge of the promotion and coordination of research and development of activity.

Our country is currently hosting several research agencies where national scientists are currently working with

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their counterparts from all over the world. Some of their findings will be presented during this conference as far as malaria is concerned.

Distinguished researchers, your efforts and commitment will certainly save millions of lives. Sharing your experiences as scientists, involving policy makers, and communities in your activities is the right way if you have to conquer the numerous challenges related to malaria control. Your efforts should be more and more oriented towards problem solving.

Sponsors, managers, and scientists are all gathered under one roof today. Use this opportunity to forge capacity building, long-lasting partnership, international and regional networks in implementing the Mexico Declaration on Health adopted last year and endorsed by the World Health Organization. It's a long [inaudible] issue if you were there [inaudible] you would comprehend [interposing]

**MALE SPEAKER:** -or not to participate finding a global solution to malaria. This terrible scourge that is killing our children, our women in millions continues to threaten developments in our fights against malaria, Africa must increase its interventions and it should base its action on the results of research for our governments and our continents.

We have to insure that research is part of our national strategies for the fight against malaria and to mobilize where

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it's human and financial resources and to boost financing and create networks of researchers so that we can have good scientific discoveries [interposing] that research from malaria should be intensified. The encouraging results obtained so far, particularly as we are working towards a vaccine, it retains all our attention and gives us a reason to hope.

We should continue in this light and mobilize the necessary resources to ensure success, while waiting for a discovery of a vaccine, the research for efficient treatment, including using African pharmaceutical, should continue to be of interest to the international scientific community and pharmaceutical industry.

In this context, the Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference, through the discussion of the scientific themes and the [inaudible] of the heavy attendance by scientists from all around the world, is a unique occasion to share experiences plus to wage a new war against the scourge of malaria. Organization of this conference at the same time the role of malaria partnership for Ruma [misspelled?], which we'll hold on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 2005 should be additional encouragements to the scientists, who will find the results of their works [inaudible] decision makers.

This will be a turning point in the international action to fight against malaria. And Cameroon is proud to make a contribution while wishing you a pleasant stay in Cameroon

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**Fourth MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference:**  
**Opening Ceremony**  
11/14/05

19

and a fruitful conference. I declare on behalf of the  
President of the Republic—I declare open the Fourth MIM Pan-  
African Malaria Conference. Long live research on malaria.

[Applause]

[END RECORDING]