Malaria experts and African leaders challenged to maintain the momentum and win the race for malaria elimination

- National Malaria Control Program best practice sharing workshop takes place in Senegal, which has made great strides in malaria control
- Event brings together delegates from 33 African countries to accelerate malaria elimination efforts
- Novartis Malaria Initiative celebrates treatment delivery milestone, with more than 800 million treatments distributed since 2001, including over 300 million dispersible pediatric treatments

Dakar, Senegal / Basel, Switzerland, July 13, 2016 – Novartis convenes the 15th Annual National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) Best Practice Sharing Workshop today in Dakar, Senegal. Over the next two days, leading malaria experts and African leaders will discuss how to take on the challenge to win the race for malaria elimination.

Representatives from academia, civil society, the donor community and the public sector from 33 African countries will share knowledge and best practices to help accelerate elimination efforts across the continent.

"I'm delighted that Senegal has been chosen to host this year's NMCP Best Practice Sharing Workshop because it gives our colleagues across Africa the opportunity to see the pioneering work undertaken by community volunteers," said Awa Coll-Seck, Minister of Health of Senegal. "The country has witnessed huge declines in malaria incidence and deaths over the past five years, thanks to extensive malaria control interventions. We are confident our country can achieve complete elimination by 2030, along with the rest of the African continent."

While malaria deaths have declined by around 60% since 2000, with 6 million lives saved,1 major new challenges have surfaced, including growing resistance to frontline artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) and insecticides.2 Although preventable and treatable, malaria continues to kill a child every two minutes and threatens the lives of many more.3

This year's event will focus on key issues including efficacy and quality monitoring of existing therapies, the growing tide of resistance in Asia and its potential effect on African countries. Host country Senegal has already proven to be a leader in home-based malaria management through the use of rapid diagnostic tests administered by community volunteers, and lessons from this success will also be shared.

"Novartis is proud to convene this unique forum and bring together leading voices from across Africa to advance malaria elimination efforts," said Dr. Harald Nusser, Global Head, Novartis Malaria Initiative and Novartis Access. "Despite the many advances in the fight against the disease, we know there is still a lot to be done if we want to achieve a malaria-free world. Bridging existing gaps in access to key interventions and introducing novel tools, including next-generation antimalarial drugs, will be crucial to achieving elimination."
Delegates will also have the opportunity to meet community volunteers in a semi-rural area; attend public disease awareness sessions; hear from Global Fund representatives about the global replenishment drive to further mobilize efforts to end malaria; and hear plans for the Novartis SMS for Life 2.0 pilot – a project which uses mobile phones and online tools to improve access to malaria medicines and quality of care.

The NMCP workshop is happening as the Novartis Malaria Initiative celebrates a new treatment delivery milestone. Since 2001, Novartis has delivered more than 800 million treatments without profit, including over 300 million dispersible pediatric treatments developed in collaboration with the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), mostly to the public sector of malaria-endemic countries. Novartis recently announced an expanded partnership with MMV to further drive the development of KAF156, the first in a new class of dual-acting antimalarial compounds known as imidazolepiperazines (IZPs) that target the parasite at both the liver and blood stages of its reproductive cycle.

The NMCP Best Practice Sharing Workshop is co-chaired by Dr. Moustapha Cisse, Deputy NMCP Head in Senegal; Simone Kunene, Under Secretary of the Swaziland Ministry of Health and a former Head of the Swaziland NMCP; and Professor Zul Premji, Professor and Chair of the Department of Pathology at Aga Khan University.

About the Novartis Malaria Initiative

The Novartis Malaria Initiative is committed to drive research, development and access to novel drugs to eliminate malaria. Operated by Sandoz, the Novartis generics and biosimilars division, the Novartis Malaria Initiative is one of the pharmaceutical industry's largest access-to-medicine programs. Since 2001, the initiative has delivered more than 800 million treatments without profit, including over 300 million dispersible pediatric treatments, mostly to the public sector of malaria-endemic countries.

In 2009, the Novartis Malaria Initiative spearheaded SMS for Life to manage stock-outs of malaria medicines in sub-Saharan countries. A new enhanced version of this award-winning program, called SMS for Life 2.0, uses tablet computers to track more stock items and more disease surveillance indicators. The platform will also be used to deliver high-quality training directly to health workers at their health facility.

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