

THE REALITY OF MALARIA

The largest killer of children

Malaria kills one child every 30 seconds, about 3000 children every day.

Over one million people die from malaria each year, mostly children under five years of age, with 90 per cent of malaria cases occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa.

A heavy disease burden

An estimated 300-600 million people suffer from malaria each year.

More than 40 percent of the world's population lives in malaria-risk areas.

Malaria is particularly damaging to pregnant women and their unborn children. It can result in maternal anaemia and low birth weight - the single greatest risk factor for death during the first months of life.

A barrier to development

Malaria hampers children's schooling and social development. Many children who survive a serious attack of malaria develop physical and mental impairment.

Malaria is a major cause of poverty. The cost of malaria control and treatment drains African economies, slowing economic growth by about 1.3 per cent a year. Its prevention is an important part of poverty reduction and economic development.

THE CHALLENGES

Drug-resistance

Low cost, commonly used therapies are increasingly ineffective.

In many parts of Africa, 70 per cent of malaria cases are resistant to cheap existing antimalarials such as chloroquine and sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine.

Cost and Supply

More effective therapies - artemisinin-containing combination treatments (ACTs) - cost ten times more at US\$1-2 per adult dosage than traditional anti-malarials.

Malaria mortality can be drastically reduced by ensuring prompt access to effective antimalarial treatment, preferably using ACTs.

Bednet use

The use of insecticide-treated bed-nets can reduce malaria illness by 50 per cent in areas of high transmission, yet fewer than 5 per cent of African children sleep under a net.

WHAT UNICEF DOES

Making a difference in child survival

Supplying safe, effective and affordable anti-malarial interventions.

Developing policies with governments and advocating for more resources and attention to the biggest killer of children in Africa.

Implementing innovative and effective programmes that reach the most vulnerable

Supporting governments to implement innovative and effective programmes that reach the most vulnerable.