



Ministry of Health



## Ugandan Ministry of Health-MMV Press Release

### First-ever comprehensive report on the antimalarials market in Uganda shows how understanding markets can help improve access to medicines

**Geneva / Kampala, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008** – Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) today launched a report providing the largest-ever body of evidence supporting the need for urgent action to improve access to antimalarials. The report: *“Understanding the Antimalarials Market: Uganda 2007”*<sup>1</sup> is based on data gathered by the Ministry of Health (MoH) Uganda and MMV<sup>2</sup> a public private partnership for the development and delivery of low cost effective malaria treatments.

The MMV and MoH study found that although the government and WHO recommend a new class of effective antimalarial medicines called ‘artemisinin combination therapies’ (ACTs), these are not widely available in the rural areas of Uganda, particularly outside of government health facilities. ACTs can cost up to 60 times the price of ineffective medicines like chloroquine. The report also found that in Uganda:

- ACTs comprised only 10% of 174 different antimalarials found on the market.
- An average family’s yearly ACT needs can cost up to 62 days of the household’s basic food needs and 91 days of average household income.
- Only 50% of patients buy a full course of medicines, increasing the risk of resistance.

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<sup>1</sup> This study, led by Medicines for Malaria Venture in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Uganda, HEPS and WHO, was drafted by Martin Auton, Renia Coghlan and Aziz Maija. It identifies the following aspects of the market: the types of antimalarial medicine available on the market, availability of product by outlet type, range of prices, affordability, supply-chain structure, and price mark-ups.

<sup>2</sup> The study was carried out in nine districts of Uganda<sup>2</sup>: In June 2007, it was implemented in 5 eastern districts/district groupings: Kamuli/Kaliro, Pallisa/Budaka and Soroti; and, in September 2007, in 4 western districts: Kabarole, Kamwenge and Mubende/Mityana. The selection of two different regions took into account the two main malaria transmission settings, high and medium, in Uganda.

*"Malaria is completely curable but too many people die because effective medicines are neither affordable nor available."* said Chris Hentschel, President and Chief Executive Officer of Medicines for Malaria Venture. *"This study provides powerful evidence to policy-makers and donors to build a case for greater accessibility of effective antimalarials via all channels, public or private,"* he added.

The report showed that 71% of outlets providing antimalarial medicines are private sector facilities and that, due to their high price, ACTs are not widely available in these outlets. ACTs are free in the public sector, but are often not available due to stock-outs.

*"Governments and donors will not win the fight against malaria and poverty unless they continue to strengthen the public health system. However, the study leaves us in no doubt that ACTs must also be made available in the private sector at a price that people can afford"* stated Prof Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. *"It presents evidence on the urgent need for action to ensure ACTs reach more people, quickly. There is no time to waste."*

*"It is encouraging that MMV has used our WHO/Health Action International survey method and adapted it to improve understanding of market segmentation and dynamics. For example, medicines may be cheap in the public sector, but if they are not available the patient will turn to the more expensive products in the private pharmacy around the corner or go without treatment,"* said Hans Hogerzeil, Director, Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies, World Health Organization. *"This information will help us to increase access to effective essential medicines against malaria."*

Building on the evidence, MMV and the Ugandan Ministry of Health are conducting pilot studies to assess the impact of making subsidized ACTs available via the private sector. The market report is being launched at a critical time – when the Global Fund Board will decide when and how to implement a new subsidy initiative - the "Affordable Medicines Facility for malaria" (AMFm) - to make effective malaria medicines affordable and available through all appropriate channels.

*"The Ministry of Health Uganda is proud to have been associated with this groundbreaking work. 350 Ugandan children die every day due to malaria in my country. This report provides clear evidence on how we can make life-saving ACTs available to this vulnerable population."* said the Hon. Dr. Stephen Mallinga, Uganda's Minister of Health.

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## **MEDICINES FOR MALARIA VENTURE (MMV)**

Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) is a non-profit organization created to discover, develop and deliver effective and affordable antimalarial drugs through public-private partnerships. Our vision is a world in which these innovative medicines will cure and protect the millions at risk of malaria and help to ultimately eradicate this terrible disease.

MMV is currently managing the largest–ever portfolio of over 50 antimalarial projects in collaboration with over 100 pharmaceutical, academic, and endemic-country partners in 38 countries. The portfolio includes 19 completely new classes of compounds. Of the four projects in late-stage clinical development, three are artemisinin combination therapies (ACTs), which will be registered by stringent regulatory authorities and are expected to gain market authorization between 2009 and 2010.

New and improved treatment solutions are urgently needed for the 2.4 billion people at risk from malaria. MMV is working to ensure that its products will have the greatest possible public health impact and, most importantly, save lives.

### **For further information please contact**

Jaya Banerji (MMV)

Head of Communications

Mob: +41 79 707 7181

[www.mmv.org](http://www.mmv.org)

Mr Paul Kagwa (MoH Uganda)

Assistant Commissioner Health  
Education and Promotion

Mob: +256 772 5077999