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## **Researchers, health experts, from five African countries convene to support advocacy for malaria vaccines**

ACCRA, GHANA, July 14, 2010 – Leading medical researchers and public health officials from five African countries have concluded four days of deliberations here on strategies for supporting the introduction of malaria vaccines in countries where the malaria burden is greatest. The scientists, selected for the Malaria Vaccine Advocacy Fellowship, met with experts from global health agencies as part of the meeting aimed at energizing dialogue in sub-Saharan Africa about the need to include vaccines in an arsenal that already includes bed nets, anti-malarial drugs, and indoor residual spraying.

Malaria is a leading cause of death among young children in Africa, where most of the estimated 900,000 annual deaths from the disease occur, and accounts for 40 percent of Africa’s public health expenditure. The use of existing tools such as bed nets, drugs, and residual spraying has been effective in parts of Africa, but the disease continues to ravage the continent.

“We are closer than ever to having a first malaria vaccine available for use,” said Dr. Antoinette Ba-Nguz, Senior Program Officer for Africa at the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative’s Nairobi office and a meeting participant. “This would be an incredibly important and exciting development for Africa, a complement to the tools already in use.”

“The Malaria Vaccine Advocacy Fellowship is designed to help scientists communicate effectively, so that they support informed decision-making across the region. This is important since we know from experience how long it can take to make a vaccine widely available for use. We can’t afford for that to happen with a malaria vaccine. There are too many lives to be saved.”

The Fellowship is a program of the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative and is supported by the ExxonMobil Foundation. The fellowship is now in its fifth year and has trained more than three dozen scientists.

The Accra meeting included representatives from GHANA:

\*\* Dr. Franklin Asiedu-Bekoe, Head of Surveillance, Ashanti Regional Health Directorate in Kumasi

\*\* Dr. Sam Newton, Clinical Research Fellow at the Kintampo Health Research Centre

\*\* Dr. Felicia Owusu-Antwi, National Professional Officer for Malaria at the World Health Organization's office in Accra

From KENYA:

\*\* Dr. Benson Estambale, Director of the Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases at the University of Nairobi

\*\* Dr. John Waitumbi, Senior Scientist and Lab Research Director at the Kenya Medical Research Institute in Kisumu

From BURKINA-FASO:

\*\* Dr. Diabate Abdoulaye, Head of the medical entomology laboratory at the Institut de Recherche en Science de la Sante/Centre Muraz

\*\* Dr. Alfred B. Tiono, Head of the Public Health Department at the Centre National de Recherche et de Formation sur le Paludisme in Ougadougou

From ZAMBIA:

\*\* Dr. Christine Manyando, Senior Clinical Research Scientist and Head of the Public Health Department, Malaria Research Group, at the Tropical Diseases Research Centre in Ndola

From NIGERIA:

\*\* Dr. Olapeju Otsemobor, Monitoring & Evaluation Consultant for Wajomate Consultants in Abuja and formerly Deputy Director/Head of Monitoring & Evaluation at the National Malaria Control Program of the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health

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**About the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI)** The PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI) is a global program established at PATH in 1999 through an initial grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. MVI's mission is to accelerate the development of malaria vaccines and ensure their availability and accessibility in the developing world. MVI's vision is a world free from malaria. For more information, please visit [www.malariavaccine.org](http://www.malariavaccine.org).

**About PATH** PATH is an international nonprofit organization that creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions, enabling communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. By collaborating with diverse public- and private-sector partners, PATH helps provide appropriate health technologies and vital strategies that change the way people think and act. PATH's work improves global health and well-being. For more information, please visit [www.path.org](http://www.path.org).