21 August 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – Today, all forty-seven WHO Member States in the African Region adopted unanimously a new malaria framework for Africa. This framework aims to guide African countries on how to implement the Global Technical Strategy for malaria in the Region. It proposes specific priority interventions and actions to be implemented by Member States to reach “an African Region free of malaria”.

“*Malaria is no longer the leading cause of death among children in sub-Saharan Africa,*” says Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa. “
We have made substantial progress in controlling malaria within our Region. Since 2000, malaria death rates have plunged by 66%, translating into 6.2 million lives saved, the vast majority of them being children,
” Dr Moeti continues.

Between 2000 and 2015, the number of malaria cases and deaths within the African Region declined by 42% and 66%, respectively. However, despite the significant progress made, malaria continues to be a major health and development problem in the Region. Globally, the African Region still bears the biggest malaria burden with approximately 190 million cases (89% of the global total) and 400 000 deaths (91% of the global total) in 2015 alone. In addition, over 800 million people in the African Region are still at risk of malaria. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, WHO reassures a firm commitment to end the epidemic by 2030.

“*In 2015, two in three households in Africa did have their own insecticide-treated mosquito net, compared to only 2% back in 2000,* ” says the Regional Director. “*More and more children get to sleep under a net, and we need to continue to invest in changing people’s behaviours,*
” she added. In addition, more and more people with suspected malaria do get tested before

they receive any treatment. In 2014, 65% of the suspected malaria cases got tested before treatment compared to only 41% in 2010.

Some of the main challenges to tackle malaria include gaps in access to available prevention methods, the limited number of interventions available and increasing resistance to medicines and insecticides. In addition, weak health systems present a very high risk to malaria control and elimination. During the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, malaria control gains were lost in the severely affected countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Based upon a population at risk of malaria of about 830 million people, an estimated US$ 66 billion will be needed to eliminate the disease from the African continent by 2030.

WHO Regional Committee for Africa adopts new malaria framework