

Roll back malaria campaign averts 94,000 newborn deaths

**By Guardian
Reporter**

A NEWLY released report by the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership has averted nearly 94,000 newborn deaths as a result of malaria interventions during pregnancy between 2009 and 2012 in areas of high transmission incidence.

The report that is co-authored by the Liverpool

School of Tropical Medicine and RBN was launched yesterday in New York along the high-level segment of the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc).

It highlights the impact of malaria interventions on maternal, newborn and child health.

According to the report, countries that use malaria control interventions during

Continued on Page 2

Roll back malaria campaign averts 94,000 newborn deaths

From page 1

pregnancy had child mortality rates dropped by 20 percent, putting them at a better position to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In Africa, 10,000 women and between 75,000 and 200,000 children under the age of one are estimated to die annually as a consequence of malaria infection during pregnancy.

RBM's Acting Executive Director, Dr Thomas Teuscher said that each year, there are an estimated 125 million pregnancies in areas of high malaria transmission around the world, which result in some 83 million live births.

"Pregnant women in malaria endemic areas have a 50 percent higher risk of malaria infection during pregnancy than non-pregnant women. We must do everything we can to protect these precious moments and allow all women to safely carry and deliver their babies," he said.

The report suggested for highly effective nature of malaria prevention efforts during pregnancy and collaboration to ensure strong protection among the expectants mothers.

The report further noted that current results outlined in the report have been achieved with generally low levels of intervention coverage across sub-Saharan African countries.

However, it emphasises on the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs)

to reduce the risk of deaths resulting from malaria diseases within the first 28 days of life by 18 percent and decrease low birth weight deliveries by 21 percent.

Meanwhile, RBM partners have called for renewed commitment and greater collaboration between maternal health and endemic malaria communities to increase access to interventions and maximise the impact of efforts. "With some 500 days until the 2015 deadline of the MDGs and a challenging financial landscape, continued partnership to scale-up delivery of these life-saving interventions is critical in ensuring mothers and children are able to lead healthy lives and contribute to their communities," the report said.

Malaria in pregnancy still exerts a heavy toll and contributes largely to maternal and neonatal mortality. It is a major cause of anaemia in pregnant women, and can lead to maternal death at delivery due to haemorrhage.

It also contributes to mothers giving birth to dead fetus, preterm birth, and low birth weight, which increases the risk of death within the first days of the child's life.

RBM was founded by UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and the World Bank in 1998 as a global framework to coordinate global action against malaria.

Currently it has more than 500 organisations across various sectors.