



World Health  
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## **Nigeria Receives Malaria Vaccines Ahead of Roll Out**

**Abuja, Nigeria – 17 October 2024** — In a historic step toward combating malaria in Nigeria, the first-ever malaria vaccines have been delivered to the Government of Nigeria, thanks to efforts by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF and WHO. The historic handover took place in Abuja, marking a critical milestone in the fight against malaria, a disease that continues to claim the lives of thousands of children under five every year in Nigeria.

As Africa's most populous country, Nigeria carries the highest burden of malaria globally, accounting for approximately 27% of the global malaria burden and 31% of malaria deaths worldwide. According to the 2023 World Malaria Report, nearly 200,000 deaths from malaria occurred in Nigeria. Children under five and pregnant women are the most affected, with a national malaria prevalence rate of 22% in children aged 6-59 months as of 2021. In some regions, such as Kebbi State, this rate is as high as 49%.

### **A National Effort to Combat Malaria**

Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health has been leading critical malaria control interventions, including the distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets (LLINs) and Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC). The introduction of the malaria vaccine marks another powerful tool in the country's comprehensive strategy to combat the disease.

"The arrival of the malaria vaccine is a monumental step in our national efforts to reduce malaria morbidity and mortality," said Professor Muhammad Ali Pate, Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare. "With the support of UNICEF, Gavi, and WHO, we are on a path toward achieving our goal of a malaria-free Nigeria."

### **Malaria Vaccine Rollout Plan**

The malaria vaccine, which requires four doses, will be administered to children under one year of age as part of Nigeria's Routine Immunization schedule. The first phase of the rollout will begin in Kebbi and Bayelsa States in November 2024, where malaria prevalence is particularly high, with over 800,000 doses set to be distributed during this phase.

## **Partner Support and Global Collaboration**

UNICEF and Gavi have played crucial roles in supporting the procurement and distribution of the vaccines. The cost of vaccines, transport and administration are supported by Gavi and the Government of Nigeria, with UNICEF responsible for procurement and shipment, and working with WHO to support administration.

“This is a landmark moment in our collective mission to save lives and protect children from preventable diseases like malaria,” said Cristian Munduate, UNICEF Representative in Nigeria. “The introduction of this vaccine will be life-changing for millions of Nigerian families, especially in the regions most affected by malaria.”

Gavi, emphasized the critical role of global collaboration in the fight against malaria: “Malaria remains one of Nigeria’s and Africa’s deadliest diseases, taking the lives of hundreds of thousands of children under the age of 5 each year. Rolling out this vaccine, alongside the other powerful tools we have to fight this disease, represents a major step forward towards our goal of a malaria-free future. We look forward to working with the government of Nigeria, WHO, UNICEF, the Global Fund, civil society and other partners towards a successful rollout,” said Tokunbo Oshin, Director of High Impact Countries, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

## **Looking Ahead**

The malaria vaccine introduction aligns with Nigeria’s National Malaria Elimination Programme, which envisions a malaria-free future for the country. By combining the vaccine with existing interventions like LLINs and SMC, Nigeria is better positioned to make significant strides in reducing malaria transmission and deaths.

“We are confident that this vaccine in combination with other preventive measures will drastically reduce the burden of malaria in Nigeria and help us move closer to achieving the goal of a malaria free Africa” said Dr. Walter Mulombo, WHO Representative in Nigeria.

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