

**PRESS RELEASE NO. 16/2005****THE AU MARKS THE 5TH AFRICA MALARIA CONTROL DAY**
25 APRIL 2005

African countries will on 25 April, 2005 commemorate the 5th Africa Malaria Control Day. The ceremony meant for awareness-raising campaign in Member States will particularly focus on the Theme: *“Unite Against Malaria”* and the Slogan: *“Together we can beat Malaria”*. The Theme underscores the importance the African Union attaches to malaria control and the concerted efforts being deployed in this regard by all stakeholders at community, national, regional, continental and international levels.

Africa Malaria Control Day was declared by Heads of State and Government in 2000 prior to the birth of the African Union because of the resurgence of the epidemic on the Continent, putting children under five and pregnant mothers particularly at risk.

Among other reasons adduced, the spread of malaria is largely due to public ignorance, lack of funding to acquire the necessary appropriate malaria drugs, environmental susceptibility especially in countries threatened by conflicts and instability in which malaria is seen as most rampant.

New approaches to the eradication of malaria include the Roll Back Malaria African project which supports early detection and adequate case management and fosters epidemic preparedness and response as well as strengthens surveillance, while promoting the application of integrated vector control and Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs).

Malaria Control, particularly with regard to gaining access to essential drugs and ITNs, has been listed as one of the priorities of the African Union in its Strategic Work Plan for 2005 to 2007. The African Union during this year’s Malaria Day celebration will be soliciting international partnership in creating necessary awareness that:

- **Malaria can kill in less than 24 hours;**
- **Malaria is preventable and curable;**
- **Home is the first hospital;**
- **Fighting malaria is the responsibility of everybody!**

Hence the AU calls for effective partnerships between communities and national governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, the private sector, NGOs and the World Health Organization (WHO) in tackling the epidemic.

It is the view of the African Union that services have to be brought to the people under threat in form of simple packages of effective drugs to be kept in the home for immediate use when required.

Addis Ababa, April 24, 2005