There were 405,000 malaria-related deaths and 228 million malaria cases in 2018. Infants and pregnant women were by far the most frequent casualties of the mosquito-borne parasite. Unitaid is investing in new tools and strategies that the WHO’s 2019 World Malaria Report deems indispensable to ending the epidemic by a target date of 2030. Progress has been complicated by mosquitoes’ growing resistance to long-used insecticides.

NEW IDEAS, NEW TOOLS

Unitaid identifies, funds and cultivates innovations with the greatest potential to reduce the global burden of malaria, then collaborates with partner organizations to ensure that they are widely introduced. Unitaid has been actively expanding its malaria portfolio, which has tripled in value since the beginning of 2017 and now stands at US$ 396 million. As part of that expansion, Unitaid is intensifying its initiatives for pregnant women, infants and children, where malaria illness and death is most concentrated.

Changing The Landscape

Unitaid’s seasonal chemoprevention project with Malaria Consortium, ACCESS-SMC (2014-2018), demonstrated that the lives of more than 80,000 small children in Africa’s Sahel region could be saved every year through monthly doses of oral medication during the high-transmission rainy season. The project proved this type of prevention to be feasible and affordable, with a cost per child of only US$ 3.40 per season. ACCESS-SMC’s success led to seasonal malaria chemoprevention coverage in the Sahel jumping from 4 percent in 2013 to 54 percent in 2019 as other countries adopted the strategy.

Our US$ 65 million NgenIRS initiative (2016-Jan 2020) has ushered in affordable new-generation indoor sprays to kill insecticide-resistant mosquitoes, reviving a key malaria-prevention tool that had been in decline. Millions of people across Africa stand to benefit from the new insecticides. IVCC is lead implementer.

Projects & Partners

Prevention

- **New Nets (2018-2022)**: One of the best ways to avoid malaria is to sleep under an insecticide-treated bed net. Co-financed with the Global Fund, the US$ 66 million New Nets Project is piloting bed nets treated with new insecticide formulations. The nets are designed to kill mosquitoes that have developed resistance to pyrethroids, a long-used insecticide. IVCC leads the work.

- **Protection in pregnancy (2017-2022)**: The US$ 50 million TIPTOP project with Jhpiego is preventing malaria in expectant mothers. At its midpoint, TIPTOP reported an increase in antimalaria coverage in pregnancy across the four project countries.
• **Anti-parasitic drugs (2019-2023):** Mosquitoes die when they bite people or farm animals treated with ivermectin. The US$ 25.3 million [BOHEMIA project](#) tracks the impact of mass-distribution of the drug in high malaria transmission areas. Led by ISGlobal.

• **Malaria vaccine (2017-2020):** Unitaid is contributing US$ 9.6 million to the World Health Organization’s [MVIP project](#), a pilot of the world’s first malaria vaccine. The vaccinations began in April 2019, in Malawi and Ghana.

• **Innovative repellent (2019-2024):** Plastic sheets treated with slow-release repellents drive mosquitoes away from inhabited areas such as refugee camps. The US$ 33.7 million [AEGIS project](#) led by the University of Notre Dame evaluates their effectiveness.

**Treatment**

• **Better malaria drugs (2017-2020):** Our project with [Medicines for Malaria Venture](#) is increasing the number of quality-assured malaria medicines, as well as the number of countries where they are available.

• **Emergency measures (2017-2020):** Some high-malaria zones are hours’ travel from health facilities. A single rectal artesunate capsule can buy time for a child with severe malaria to get to a clinic for treatment. Our [CARAMAL project](#) with Clinton Health Access Initiative aims to test and increase appropriate use of this pre-referral treatment. With responsible scale-up, Unitaid estimates that these suppositories could save up to 20,000 lives a year.

**Testing**

• **Identifying life-threatening illness (2019-2023):** Pulse oximeters are small, portable devices that can detect low oxygen in the blood, a sign of life-threatening illness. Unitaid is investing $43.3 million in two projects to pilot the devices in primary care in low-income countries. Lead implementers are ALIMA, for the [AIRE project](#) and PATH, for the [TIMCI project](#).