

**Statement on behalf of
Professor Awa-Marie Coll-Seck
Executive Director
Roll Back Malaria Partnership
by Mr Julian Fleet
Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Executive Director**

**Opening of the new Olyset factory
Arusha (Kisongo)
United Republic of Tanzania**

8 February 2008

Your Excellency, Dr Ali Mohamed Shein, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Honourable Ministers, Honourable President of Sumitomo Chemical and Chief Executive of A to Z Textile Mills, Madam Yvonne Chaka-Chaka, Roll Back Malaria Partnership and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Partners and Colleagues,

It is my great honor to join you today representing Dr Awa-Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, who deeply regrets that she could not be here today due to an urgent and insurmountable demand that prevented her from travelling. Dr Coll-Seck has very fond memories of her visit to Arusha with Princess Astrid, the Roll Back Malaria Special Representative, in October of last year. She sends her warmest wishes to all of you gathered here for this important, indeed historic, event.

On behalf of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM), I would like to thank our hosts, the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as our partners A to Z Textile Mills and Sumitomo Chemical for inviting us to participate in the opening of the new Olyset net factory. This joint venture between a multi-national Japanese company, Sumitomo Chemical, and a Tanzanian company based here in Arusha, A to Z Textile Mills, is an inspiring example of the concrete results that RBM looks to promote through partnership.

Once Olyset nets were fully approved for use by the World Health Organization in 2002, African manufacturers expressed interest in producing them. In 2003, the World Health Organization and Roll Back Malaria facilitated a collaboration between Acumen Fund, A to Z Textile Mills, ExxonMobil, Population Services International, UNICEF, and Sumitomo Japan, which led to the royalty-free technology transfer from Sumitomo to A to Z. This venture enabled the factory to expand its capacity for long lasting insecticidal net production, and Tanzania became the leading African producer of long lasting nets, utilizing new technologies to combat an ancient scourge.

Experience shows that when partners work together, and when malaria-control strategies -- such as nets, effective medicines, indoor spraying -- are employed comprehensively and on a mass scale, extraordinary success can be realized.

Indeed, the United Republic of Tanzania, with political commitment at the highest level, is a prime example of what works in the fight against malaria. In a number of areas in mainland Tanzania, where insecticide-treated net use increased to 60% and indoor spraying and effective malaria treatment were introduced thanks to financial support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, child mortality has declined by 50%.

In Zanzibar, where a comprehensive set of interventions has been rolled out fully in collaboration with the US President's Malaria Initiative, there are reports of an immense impact, with a nearly complete reduction in the incidence of malaria in (86 percent decline in malaria cases) in a very short period of time.

Partners in other African countries are also achieving important successes.

In Kenya and Rwanda, mass net distribution campaigns, combined with access to effective medicines, reduced malaria related deaths in the targeted areas by up to 50% in only a few years.

Globally, malaria is now the subject of unprecedented attention and political will. The year 2007 marked a turning point in the history of the global response to malaria, with increased funding, and new partners joining in the ranks.

The recent successes encourage us, but we remain preoccupied with the fact that so many children, primarily on this continent, are dying unnecessarily, that the continuing malaria-related death, disease and economic loss could be averted if the available effective preventive and treatment interventions were made universally accessible to all those in need.

While the social, economic, environmental and systems challenges to universal access remain daunting, today our partners Sumitomo and A to Z are showing a way to tackle some of them. We have come together to celebrate the founding of a new joint venture that will increase the production of nets in the region to some 10 million annually. This will lower the cost of distribution and improve access to these vital commodities.

But there is another key aspect. We often speak of the vicious cycle of malaria, ill-health, and poverty. This factory has also created 3,200 jobs which will help to support 20,000 people: a cascade of positive effects, creating jobs, generating income, and reducing malaria-related deaths and episodes, freeing hospital beds, and reducing the disease's huge burden on the economies of Africa.

Like all of us here today, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership is extremely proud to be working with you and of the growing momentum that the Olyset factory and this joint venture represents for our partnership as a whole.

On behalf of Dr Coll-Seck and the RBM Partnership, we express our gratitude to the United Republic of Tanzania and the other governments represented here for their leadership in the global fight against malaria, we applaud the vision and action of Sumitomo and A to Z, and we warmly congratulate all our partners who have contributed to this initiative.

Thank you.