



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

**To:** Editors & Health Journalists

**Issued by:** Department of Health

**Date:** Friday, 08 October 2021

### **Malaria Elimination in Southern Africa welcomes Malaria vaccine**

**Pretoria:** The Minister of Health of South Africa, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community's malaria Elimination Eight Initiative (E8) Ministerial Committee, Dr Joe Phaahla has described the approval of first malaria vaccine called Mosquirix by World Health Organization as a breakthrough to accelerate plans to eliminate malaria out of Southern Africa and the rest of the world.

After more than three decades of research and development in searching for a malaria vaccine, WHO has made a historic recommendation to endorse and scale up manufacturing and deployment of the first-ever promising malaria vaccine for children under the age of five years in regions with moderate to high *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria transmission.

According Dr Phaahla, the Mosquirix vaccine, which is scientifically known as RTS,S/AS01, is a significant addition to the current set of complementary malaria prevention tools available to higher burden malaria endemic countries, including Angola and Mozambique.

"We see this malaria vaccine as a landmark development in the history of the fight against the spread of this deadly infectious disease, which kills about half a million people every year including 260,000 children below the age of five years, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa", said Dr Phaahla.

Although, in the case of South Africa, the Mosquirix vaccine may not be indicative for local use due to the country being in a low to very low malaria transmission setting, nevertheless, the other seven E8 countries with moderate to higher burden of malaria transmission, such Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, will benefit from the implementation of this vaccine.

Reduction in malaria transmission amongst these moderate to high burden countries will contribute to elimination efforts in those low-transmission E8 countries (Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia and South Africa) where importation of malaria from higher-burden states still poses a challenge to malaria elimination

Equally, the implementation of this vaccine will also benefit other moderate to higher countries in the SADC region and ultimately African continent. Dr Phaahla added that, “we will do all we can to ensure that the vaccine can reach our shores, where it is required to protect children from severe disease and death”.

The development of the first-generation vaccine against a human parasite is a huge achievement. Parasites are much more complex than viruses or bacteria, and many scientists have been working towards this goal for over 30 years.

The Elimination Eight Initiative (E8) is a coalition of eight countries working across national borders to eliminate malaria in Southern Africa by the year 2030. It was formed to serve as the malaria response arm of the SADC region.

**For more information and media queries, please contact:**

Mr Foster Mohale  
Director Media Relations  
National Health Department, South Africa  
Cell: 0724323792  
E-mail:Foster.Mohale@health.gov.za