

Ghanaian and Nigerian Private Sector Companies Recognized for Contribution to Malaria Prevention: PSMP and GBC-CAMA Awards 2018



Ecobank receives award in Sustainability-focused Malaria Programming category, pictured with NMCP Program Manager (left)

Star businesses in Ghana and Nigeria were awarded for their investments in malaria prevention during a West Africa Zero Malaria Now! recognition ceremony, organized by the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication's Private Sector Malaria Prevention (PSMP) project with the GBCHealth Corporate Alliance on Malaria Africa (CAMA) and the Ghana National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP). The First Lady of Ghana, Mrs. Rebecca Akufo Addo, was a special guest of honour during the event, which took place in Accra, Ghana, 5 April 2018.

Recognition events such as this one are platforms for companies to showcase their successful practices in malaria prevention. They are designed to motivate companies to sustain their investments while encouraging other companies to reflect on the returns. Capitalizing on the momentum created during this event, the NMCP and PSMP are following up with select companies that want to play a larger role in supporting malaria prevention efforts, in line with the Government of Ghana's Ghana Beyond Aid initiative.

These actions are critical for Ghana because funding for malaria in the country is decreasing. There are donor

funding limits for lower-middle income countries and at the same time growing movements in donor countries that challenge foreign aid generally, which means that funding for life-saving services and commodities such as ITNs is tight, and may be in peril. Encouraging businesses to play a role in filling the gaps makes sense since businesses also suffer from the effects of malaria—in employee absenteeism and decreased productivity—which, in turn, negatively impacts profitability and company reputation.

During the ceremony, First Lady Akufo Addo reminded corporate leaders that malaria has serious implications for human development, businesses, and economic growth, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Eliminating malaria, she declared, "would quicken our pace of development and the vision of moving from a mindset of dependency to one of achieving our own destiny." The First Lady called on business leaders to step up and sustain their efforts in malaria prevention at the work place and in the communities around them. "A win in reducing malaria is a win in development," she said.

Notable private and parastatal companies from Ghana and Nigeria in attendance included AngloGold Ashanti Ghana, Dangote Foundation Nigeria, Ghana Broad Casting

Corporation, Ghana Revenue Authority, EcoBank Ghana Ltd., Exxon Mobile Nigeria, and many others. Major donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and UN agencies, such as DFID, USAID, United Nations Children's Fund, and Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (JHU-CCP), which over the years have supported malaria control activities in West Africa, also attended the event.

Ghana on the Move Toward Success in Malaria Control

The Dangote Foundation, which is linked to a business empire cutting across the sub-Saharan African Region, made a plea for businesses to re-examine their performance in caring for the health of the workers and communities. "It is our workers, their families and communities that make us what we are, and if it is malaria that impedes their efforts, then let's fight and defeat it now," said Ms. Zouera Yousoufou, Dangote Foundation CEO.

The Recognized Companies

Different categories of citations were awarded. AngloGold Ashanti Ghana, Access Bank Nigeria, Nigeria Breweries, and Hippo Valley Estate Nigeria were recognized for innovative malaria programming in their respective countries.

In the category of sustainability-focused malaria programming, Asanko Gold Ghana Ltd, EcoBank Ghana, Exxon Mobile Nigeria, and Dangote Foundation Nigeria were recognized. Recognition for ongoing efforts was also accorded to RMG Ghana Ltd., Savana Fruits Ghana Ltd., Agricare Ltd Ghana, Sundial Brands Ltd. Ghana, Tana Nets Nigeria, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, and Graphic Corporation Ghana Ltd.

Selected individuals were presented with special Hall of Fame plaques for their leadership and direction in propelling Ghana's national malaria control activities. First Lady Akuffo Addo received a Hall of Fame plaque for leadership of the Infanta Malaria Foundation, an NGO, and for its support for malaria control activities nationwide. Mr. Steve Knowles was recognized with a Hall of Fame plaque for his pioneering role in setting up and managing the AngloGold Ashanti Integrated Malaria Control Program about a decade ago. Dr. George Amofa, a former Deputy Director General of the Ghana Health Service, and Dr. Constance Bart-Plange, a former manager of the Ghana NMCP, also received Hall of Fame plaques for their role in developing and successfully managing Ghana's national malaria control program.

Since its inception about a year ago, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)-funded PSMP project—in partnership with the NMCP—aimed to encourage private sector companies in Ghana to follow the lead of companies such as AngloGold Ashanti, benefiting their employees, communities, and the nation.



First Lady of Ghana Rebecca Akufo-Addo was the keynote speaker in the award ceremony, pictured with PSMP Chief of Party Felix Nyanor-Fosu

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In her remarks, the Acting Manager of the NMCP, Dr. Keziah Malm, informed the audience that Ghana has reduced the prevalence of malaria in children under five years from 27% in 2011 to 21% in 2016, while malaria deaths dropped from 2,799 in 2012 to 603 in 2017. She said these achievements were due to active collaboration among malaria partners in the country, including the private sector companies. She commended JHU-CCP and DFID for keeping the partnership alive through the work of the PSMP project.

In his closing remarks, the Director General of the Ghana Health Service, Dr. Anthony Nsiah Asare, stated that the Ghana Health Service would always need the support of all partners to effectively deliver its services. Most important, however, he reiterated, "If Ghana would reach its 2030 SDG Goal 3:3 of ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other communicable diseases, then partnership with the private sector would be a key factor. We need the support of the private sector to make it possible."



PSMP is a three-year project funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and operated by the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP). The purpose of the PSMP is to catalyze private sector engagement in malaria control, in particular in the supply and distribution of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLIN).