

## STN Frequently Asked Questions

### About Spread the Net

**How many bed nets has *Spread the Net* raised money for so far?** As of May 31, 2009, the *Spread the Net* campaign has raised money for over 376,600 long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets for Liberia and Rwanda, a significant step toward the total campaign target of 500,000.

### **What does my \$10 *Spread the Net* donation pay for?**

A \$10 donation to *Spread the Net* covers the purchase of a long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed net, the transportation and distribution of the net to families, community education about how to use the bed net properly, monitoring and evaluation of bed-net use after distribution, administrative costs and UNICEF's global work on malaria policy and programming.

### **Why is *Spread the Net* concentrating on Liberia and Rwanda only?**

All malaria-endemic countries are in need of bed nets to help control malaria, and UNICEF is actively working around the world to provide insecticide-treated bed nets and malaria-treatment drugs. Liberia and Rwanda were chosen as the beneficiaries of the *Spread the Net* campaign because of the great need in both countries, their recent histories of civil strife, and a desire on the part of Canadians to support them as they rebuild.

### About malaria

#### **What is malaria?**

Malaria is a parasitic disease caused by a one-cell parasite called Plasmodium. The parasite is transmitted from person to person through the bite of the female Anopheles mosquito.

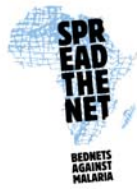
#### **Where does malaria occur?**

More than three billion people live under the threat of malaria. Malaria occurs in countries in South and Central America, the Caribbean, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Western Pacific, the Middle East and throughout Africa. The burden of malaria is considered highest in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **How serious is malaria?**

Malaria is responsible for killing more than one million people every year; a severe infection can kill a child within a matter of hours. Ninety percent of those deaths occur in Africa and most are among children under five years of age.

Malaria undermines the development of children who survive and can leave them with persistent anaemia, lifelong brain damage or paralysis. In severe cases of



cerebral malaria, surviving children can be left with epilepsy, spasticity, speech disorders and blindness.

Malaria is responsible for as many as half a billion cases of illness each year. When contracted by pregnant women, malaria kills up to 200,000 new-born babies each year. It is also estimated to cause up to 15 per cent of maternal anaemia cases, which puts women at risk of severe hemorrhage and death.

### **Is there malaria in Canada?**

Malaria was virtually eradicated in Canada by the early 1950s. There are still incidents of malaria in Canada among people who have contracted the disease in their travels to malaria-endemic countries.

### **What is the difference between the West Nile virus and malaria?**

West Nile is a virus; malaria is caused by a parasite. Malaria is most severe in children and pregnant women; West Nile virus most severely affects people over the age of 50. The effects of the West Nile virus occur three to 14 days after infection; the effects of malaria occur almost immediately after transmission. The *Culex pipiens*, or common household mosquito, spreads the West Nile virus when it feeds on a blood meal from infected birds. Malaria is spread by a female, night-biting *Anopheles* mosquito infected with the *Plasmodium* parasite.

### **Why can't malaria be eradicated in endemic countries the way it was in North America?**

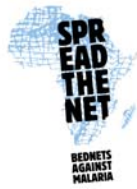
A global malaria-eradication campaign was started in the 1950s, but it failed because of problems including resistance of mosquitoes to insecticides used to kill them and resistance of malaria parasites to drugs used to treat them.

## **About Malaria Control and Insecticide-treated Bed Nets**

### **Are there ways to prevent malaria transmission?**

Sleeping under an insecticide-treated bed net (ITN) is the most effective and inexpensive way to prevent mosquitoes from biting and transmitting the parasite that causes malaria. Properly used ITNs can reduce malaria transmission by at least 50 per cent and overall child deaths from all causes by 20 per cent. ITNs not only prevent mosquitoes from biting children, they also kill the mosquito and the malaria parasite, thereby further reducing transmission of the disease. To keep a regular ITN effective, it must be treated with insecticide on a regular basis, a requirement that stands in the way of sustaining a decline in malaria-related mortality.

UNICEF has supported the development of a bed net that can effectively reduce malaria transmission for up to five years. The long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed net (LLIN) has insecticide impregnated into the woven fibers of the net. This new



LLIN retains its mosquito-killing ability for up to five years without retreatment, exceeding the life span of the bed net itself due to regular wear and tear.

### **Does UNICEF charge people for bed nets?**

No, UNICEF does not charge for the bed nets it supplies to governments or partner organizations.

### **Why do some governments in developing countries charge for bed nets?**

Some governments are not able to fully fund their national health systems and have policies to charge service fees for health care delivery. In some situations, governments may charge for a bed net because of the additional cost it presents to regular health service delivery. UNICEF is a prominent and consistent advocate for free bed nets for all children under the age of five and pregnant women.

### **How many bed nets has UNICEF distributed?**

UNICEF is the world's largest global procurer and deliverer of insecticide-treated bed nets, with 18.8 million procured in 2007. More than 90 per cent of these were long-lasting, insecticide-treated nets that do not require re-treatment.

### **From where does UNICEF purchase its nets?**

There are currently two countries that have suppliers of long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets: Japan, where the technology was developed, and Tanzania. UNICEF procures the nets from suppliers in these two countries.

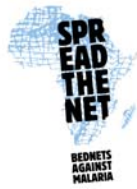
### **What is UNICEF doing to increase the use of bed nets?**

Bed net distribution is an essential part of UNICEF's health programming for children and mothers. UNICEF supports community education campaigns to empower communities and families by improving their knowledge of the importance of malaria prevention and the proper use of insecticide-treated nets. UNICEF distributes bed nets through health centers and antenatal clinics, through projects it is supporting, such as recovery centers for children formerly involved with armed groups, and during National Immunization Days.

## **About World Malaria Day**

### **What is the significance of World Malaria Day?**

World Malaria Day is commemorated every year on April 25 to draw the world's attention to the global scourge of malaria — a preventable and curable disease. It is a day to renew political commitment, advocate for more resources to combat malaria around the world and raise awareness among families and communities on how to prevent and treat the disease. Formerly commemorated as Africa Malaria Day, country delegations to the World Health Organization voted in May 2007 to increase the scope of the day's focus to World Malaria Day.



## **About the Economic Toll of Malaria**

### **What is the economic and development toll of malaria?**

It has been estimated that malaria costs Africa \$12 billion every year in lost Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Malaria also accounts for approximately 40 per cent of all public health expenditures in Africa. It is estimated that malaria has slowed economic growth in some African countries by 1.3 per cent per year.

### **How much is needed annually to support malaria programmes in Africa?**

A rough estimate of the total costs for malaria control in Africa, including universal coverage for prevention and treatment interventions, would be approximately \$2 billion per year, of which about \$850 million would be operational and health system support costs. Preventing and controlling malaria has a high rate of return in terms of Africa's human and economic development and is necessary for sustainable development on the continent.

## **About Receiving Bed Nets for Non-UNICEF Programmes**

### **I support/know of an orphanage/school/institution that needs bed nets.**

#### **How can I apply to *Spread the Net* to receive bed nets for this organization?**

Unfortunately, we cannot supply your group with bed nets. *Spread the Net* supports UNICEF's purchase and distribution of bed nets in Liberia and Rwanda to benefit children under the age of five and pregnant women. In these countries, UNICEF works through its implementing partners, primarily the respective Ministries of Health, to distribute bed nets. We suggest that the organization you support consider discussing its needs with its local Ministry of Health.

### **I have a net that I purchased for a trip. Can I donate it to *Spread the Net*?**

While your offer is definitely appreciated, unfortunately we cannot accept your net. UNICEF Canada does not send donated bed nets from Canada to UNICEF offices in other countries due to high transportation costs, logistical constraints and quality-control concerns. In partnership with UNICEF Canada, *Spread the Net* is raising funds in Canada to purchase and distribute long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets for Liberia and Rwanda. Funds raised by *Spread the Net* are being used by UNICEF to purchase bed nets as part of large UNICEF orders, allowing UNICEF to buy the nets at the lowest possible cost.