PRESS RELEASE

BRIEF ON MALARIA VACCINE IMPLEMENTATION IN GHANA

- Every year, malaria claims the lives of more than 400,000 people worldwide. Tens of millions more fall ill from this preventable and treatable disease. Children under the age of five in sub-Saharan Africa are especially vulnerable, accounting for about two thirds of all global deaths due to malaria.

- Ghana has made tremendous progress in the fight against malaria by rolling out proven malaria control measures, including long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying, prompt diagnosis, and effective chemoprevention with antimalarial medicine. In spite of these efforts, there were an estimated 11 million suspected cases of malaria in Ghana and 5.5 million confirmed cases in 2018. New interventions are needed to complement those currently in use to further drive down the disease burden with a view to achieving — ultimately — the vision of a world free of malaria.

- **Need for vaccine:** Malaria still remains a major public health threat. People in every part of the country are at risk of malaria, and 20 percent of all children have malaria parasites in their blood. Vaccination is a proven effective intervention against disease elimination. The malaria vaccine has thus come at an opportune time. The vaccine is being introduced in Africa because malaria is endemic only in Africa and parts of Asia.
  1. The development of the malaria vaccine started over 30 years ago in Europe.
  2. The first humans to receive this vaccine were healthy US volunteers (in a phase 1 clinical trial) about 20 years ago to establish safety.
  3. The first time these vaccines were used in trials in Africa was in 2006 where rigorous safety monitoring measures were put in place. The trials which were conducted in 11 sites in 7 African countries were completed in 2014. In all about 15,000 children received the vaccines during this period.
  4. Ghana was involved in both phase 2 and 3 trials (the last phase before licensing). Children in Agogo and Kintampo were enrolled as part of the trials, where over 3,000 children received the vaccine and have been followed up to this time without any major adverse findings.
  5. Ghana, alongside Malawi and Kenya are introducing the vaccine. Malawi started on 23rd April 2019 (about two weeks ago). Ghana began a week later and Kenya will begin next month. This is a phased introduction in Ghana and is being implemented in selected districts across
six (Bono, Ahafo, Bono East, Volta, Oti and Central) regions and all parts of the country will be covered over time.

6. The vaccine provides additional protection of 40% to children against severe malaria.
7. Considering the number of children who get malaria and the number who die yearly, a 40% reduction can be very significant.
8. The vaccine has been approved for use by the FDA in the implementation areas and FDA will continue to monitor its use as with all other vaccines.

- **Vaccines save lives.** Currently there is an outbreak of measles in the US and parts of Europe because some parents refused to vaccinate their children.
- Ghana is on the brink of eliminating measles because of the use of measles vaccines.
- Several children were dying from measles every day in major hospitals in Ghana in the mid-1970s and early 1980s but because of measles vaccines, no death has been recorded in Ghana in the last 15 years.
- The last time a child got crippled from polio was in 2008. Thanks to the polio vaccine!
- Now children in Ghana are protected against over 13 deadly childhood diseases including diphtheria, measles, poliomyelitis, diarrhea among others,
- We are happy to include malaria and we should all embrace it.

Vaccines save lives!!!!!!

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