

# BRITAIN'S GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY THE UK'S ROLE IN ENDING THE MALARIA EPIDEMIC BY 2030

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## THE ECONOMIC BURDEN OF MALARIA

Malaria is one of the world's oldest and deadliest diseases, **killing a child every minute.**<sup>1</sup>

Since 2000, significant progress has been made, with the global mortality rate halving between 2000 and 2015<sup>2</sup>. However, in recent years this has stalled and our hard-won gains are at risk. Our current trajectory risks the lives and well-being of millions for years to come. It also perpetuates the economic burden that malaria places on affected countries, preventing many from breaking out of poverty and achieving socioeconomic progress.

In June, Malaria No More UK launched a new report that reveals the economic growth that could be realised for countries around the world if we reduced the global malaria burden by 90% by 2030, one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This important research finds that malaria-endemic countries could see a boost of over \$140 billion to their collective GDP if we get back on track. This would also increase international trade, benefitting countries around the world, including the UK.

Over the next 18 months, the UK has a golden opportunity to accelerate progress towards achieving these global malaria targets. By supporting upcoming replenishments for global health organisations, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the UK will ensure countries can access the malaria-fighting tools and medicines they need. Staying on our current trajectory will mean more lives lost to a preventable and treatable disease, and missing out on a global economic boost. Now is the time to seize the opportunity, finish the job, and deliver a healthier, more secure future.

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. 2023. *Malaria*. [online] Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/malaria/#:~:text=Nearly%20every%20minute%2C%20a%20child%20under%20five%20dies%20of%20malaria,under%205%20years%20of%20age> [Accessed 13 June 2024].

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. (2015). World Malaria Report 2015. Retrieved from [https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/200018/9789241565158\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/200018/9789241565158_eng.pdf?sequence=1)

## THE REPORT'S KEY FINDINGS

Our new research, produced in collaboration with Oxford Economics Africa, finds that if efforts were made to get us on track for the 2030 goal of reducing malaria cases and deaths by 90%, a significant boost to GDP could be achieved for malaria-endemic and donor countries. Some of the key findings reveal that:

- Achieving our global targets on malaria could boost the GDP of malaria-endemic countries by \$142.7 billion in the 2023-2030 period. The African continent alone would see a projected GDP increase of \$126.9 billion, over 88.9% of the total global potential gain.
- The UK would see a boost in their trade through exports to key African countries, with an increase of almost half a billion dollars. International trade would in total increase by \$80.7 billion.
- Nigeria, which faced over 25% of malaria cases in 2022, would see the most substantial gains, with an increase in GDP of over \$35 billion. Over 25% of the UK's boost in trade would come through an increase in its exports to Nigeria.

*Why would there be this economic boost?*

- Malaria disproportionately impacts countries with emerging economies and high disease burdens, many of which are trading partners of the UK. Tackling malaria would boost productivity and reduce healthcare costs, helping affected nations and the global economy, whilst enhancing living standards and unlocking the potential of individuals.
- In the short term, reducing malaria would mean fewer out-of-pocket payments for malaria treatments and care, compared to the catastrophically high costs some families are still facing. It would also reduce the burden of unpaid care, often provided by mothers, which limits family income.
- In the long term, it would increase the potential for economic engagement, as children would spend more time learning rather than being treated for malaria. Families would be able to invest more in education, helping them to break the poverty cycle and boost their prosperity – and improving the productivity of endemic countries where they live.

## THE UK'S ROLE IN FIGHTING MALARIA

The UK is well-placed to make a significant difference in the fight against malaria. To save millions of lives and help access these economic benefits, the government should prioritise:

- **Investing in and supporting Britain's life-science sector:**

The UK's life science sector has helped to develop some of the most important malaria-fighting tools – and our report shows that the UK is the second highest contributor to malaria science R&D. The UK should build on this by funding Product Development Partnerships, not-for-profit organisations which bring together industry, academia, non-profit and private sector to create tools that address global health problems. PDPs such as the Liverpool-based Innovative Vector Control Consortium (IVCC) and Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) have delivered dozens of lifesaving innovations to save millions and have long been recognised as having high-impact investment potential. Support for these organisations would ensure the next generation of vital malaria tools are developed.

- **Providing a Strong Pledge to the Global Fund**

The UK has been a key donor of the Global Fund since it co-founded the organisation in 2002. The Global Fund is pivotal in getting new tools and medicines to communities around the world, ranging from insecticide-treated bed nets to antimalarials. They work to strengthen health systems so they can be more resilient to climate change and be prepared for health challenges beyond malaria, Tuberculosis and AIDS. In recent years, their Emergency Fund has enabled quick and effective response in the face of extreme weather events and other emergencies, such as flooding in Pakistan. Alongside saving lives, investments through the Global Fund on malaria prevention would also help to unlock economic growth and productivity gains. At the next replenishment, the UK must provide a strong pledge to the Global Fund so we can finish the job and end the malaria epidemic.

- **Funding Gavi to Deploy the New Malaria Vaccines**

With the development of two malaria vaccines in recent years, Gavi is now supporting the fight against this disease by delivering malaria immunisation programmes. Gavi has long led the way in improving vaccine access for communities at risk of diseases around the world, saving millions of lives over the last 24 years. Gavi is now expanding its support for localisation, helping to increase the capacity for sustainable vaccine manufacturing in Africa. It is critical that Gavi is now funded alongside the Global Fund, as these malaria vaccines are most effective when deployed alongside other key tools, allowing us to accelerate progress. The UK has long been a key donor for Gavi, and now through funding effective malaria programmes led by Gavi and the Global Fund, we can help deliver a healthier and more prosperous world for everyone.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The next 18 months represent a golden opportunity for the UK to get the malaria fight back on track. British support and investment in the Global Fund and Gavi will not only save lives - it will boost economic output and ensure that the British-backed scientific breakthroughs are not confined to laboratories but reach the most vulnerable populations in need of life-saving interventions. Most importantly, these efforts can pave the way for a future where malaria is but a distant memory.

The recommendations below outline what the UK's role in combatting malaria effectively over the next decade should look like:

- **Ensure full funding for Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance:** The UK Government must commit to fully financing Gavi, which is essential in the battle against malaria. Their efforts must be fully supported to ensure effective control and immunisation reach those most in need.
- **Ensure full funding for The Global Fund to combat HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria:** It is critical that the UK commits to funding the Global Fund. This is vital to sustaining and scaling up efforts to prevent and treat these diseases, ultimately saving millions of lives and strengthening health systems in vulnerable regions. The Global Fund's arsenal of tools, including next-generation bed nets, will in combination with vaccines primarily funded by Gavi ensure the most effective outcomes in tackling malaria.
- **Provide comprehensive funding to Product Development Partnerships through multi-year agreements:** Investing in these partnerships, such as with MMV and IVCC, goes beyond financial support; it fosters international collaboration, shares scientific expertise, and drives innovation to combat malaria globally.