



**REMARKS BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, HON. SICILY KARIUKI,
MINISTRY OF HEALTH, ON THE NATIONAL LAUNCH OF MALARIA
VACCINE, 13TH SEPTEMBER 2019, IN NDHIWA HOMA BAY COUNTY**

- **H/E Cyprian Awiti , Governor, HomaBay County**
- **Hon Martin Owino, area Member of Parliament;**
- **Hon. Senators and Members of Parliament,**
- **The WHO Country representative,**
- **The UN family,**
- **Representatives from PATH and Other Development Partners,**
- **The County Commissioner Homa Bay,**
- **Hon Speaker of the County Assembly,**
- **Hon members of the County Assembly,**
- **Hon. CECs,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is a pleasure to join you all at this important National occasion of unveiling a phased introduction of the first malaria vaccine in the world. Kenya joins Malawi and Ghana as the third African Nation to introduce the malaria vaccine. This is an affirmation of the Government's commitment towards control, elimination and eradication of communicable diseases in our Nation.

As a Nation, we have made tremendous progress in the fight against malaria through the scale-up of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), indoor residual spraying with insecticides (IRS), and appropriate diagnosis and treatment using artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs). These interventions have over the last decade reduced malaria prevalence for under-fives reduced to 8 percent from 13 percent.

However, even with these initiatives, malaria still remains one of the top 10 causes of death in the country, and a leading killer of children under 5. The prevalence has remained high, with an incidence of up to 27% among children aged less than 5 years, especially in the lake region, where the condition is endemic.

Kenya's new strategic direction for malaria eradication is to have at least 80 percent of people living in malaria-risk areas having access to appropriate malaria preventive interventions. This strategy involves the sustained implementation of the existing interventions, as well as the introduction of new interventions, such as the introduction of the malaria vaccine, which we are launching today.

The vaccine will be rolled out in a phased approach and will be implemented in the eight Counties with the highest Malaria burden of up to 20 percent. These are: Kakamega, Vihiga, Bungoma, Busia, Kisumu, Homa Bay, Migori and Siaya.

Selected sub-Counties in these 8 Counties will have the opportunity to initially introduce the vaccine while the remaining will introduce later. In order to get maximum benefits from the malaria vaccine, 4 doses will be given to children in month 6, 7, 9 and 24 of age. I therefore urge parents of children in this age group residing in the selected sub-counties to visit their nearest health facilities or selected immunization sites for vaccination to protect their loved ones from malaria.

The Malaria vaccine will be offered free of charge in all health facilities, is approved, safe and effective. Clinical trials have shown that when used alongside other recommended malaria interventions, fewer incidents of malaria in children and less hospital admissions will be experienced. The vaccine can prevent 4 out of 10 malaria Infections and prevent severe malaria by more than 30 percent in the 6-24 months age group.

Ladies and gentlemen

As we move to scale up Universal Health Care Coverage (UHC) as part of the nation's Big 4 development agenda, immunization is a key pillar of

disease control. The introduction of the malaria vaccine falls under the key portfolio of public health services that will drive the achievement of UHC.

The rising costs of healthcare and dynamic disease epidemiology and burden, make it necessary to leverage on every shilling available for healthcare services.

Thus investments in eradicating vaccine preventable diseases will yield better macro and micro economic outcomes in the country. Such investments are central to economic, social and political development as every episode of malaria is time away from day to day activities like going to school, work or engaging in development activities.

The Ministry of Health therefore remains resolute in our commitment to control, eliminate and eradicate vaccine preventable diseases in our country.

The Ministry continues to aid the procurement, warehousing and distribution of all childhood vaccines to regional depots. As we introduce the Malaria vaccine, I am glad to hand over to Homa Bay county a four-wheel drive vehicle, a motorbike and cold chain equipment, being part of a consignment of 125 fridges that have been installed across the country in the last one year, all valued at KSh. 68 Million shillings. This will facilitate the scale up of immunization activities, service delivery and Malaria vaccine introduction in the County. It is my sincere hope that this support will complement the County Investments in Immunization service delivery to reach every child.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to acknowledge the support from GAVI, the vaccine alliance, the World Health Organization, The Global Fund, UNITAID, PATH and our local development Partners in Health for their role in implementation of this important activity.

I also wish to commend the collaborative effort between the County and National Level teams.

Finally Ladies and gentlemen, lets us all join hands to make Kenya free from Vaccine Preventable Diseases.

Thank you and God bless you all.