



Fidson Healthcare Plc

P R E S S R E L E A S E

‘Malaria deaths unfortunate’- Fidson’s Marketing Chief

As the global community marked 2010 World Malaria Day on April 25, Mr. Steve Obami, Head of Marketing and Assistant General Manager, Fidson Healthcare Plc has described as “tragic and most unfortunate”, the fact that malaria remains the biggest killer of children under five in sub-Saharan Africa.

Obami lamented the fact that at the moment, malaria remains a major public health problem in Nigeria.

Quoting statistics from the World Health Organisation, WHO, Obami said, “Sadly, at the moment, an estimated 300,000 children die of the disease each year and up to 11 per cent of maternal mortality is caused by the ailment which represents one in every four deaths of children and one in 10 deaths of pregnant women.”

He added that at least “half the population of Nigerian adults suffer from at least one episode of malaria annually while children under five year have as many as three or four episodes every year. There are nearly 110 million clinically diagnosed cases of malaria recorded yearly, accounting for 60 per cent outpatient visits to the hospital and 30 per cent of hospitalisations.

“The disease also imposes a heavy social and economic burden as about N132 billion is lost to malaria yearly in prevention and treatment costs and productivity losses.”

Obami therefore called on government at all levels in Nigeria to rise up to the need to “count malaria out” in the true sense of the theme of this years’ World malaria day celebration. He said this was more important because of the upcoming review in September this year of progress made by each country towards the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

He said with the level of scientific development in the battle against malaria and the efforts of indigenous pharmaceutical companies like Fidson healthcare plc, Nigeria has no excuse for still recording the kind of high casualty it still records from malaria.

“The fact that quick, effective diagnosis and treatment is now possible makes the continuing tragedy of malaria in the developing world, especially in Nigeria, all the more unacceptable. Today, newer treatment called artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) is proving extremely effective at combating malaria. It acts quickly and has few of the side-effects known with previous drugs treatment. The WHO, as well as 41 African countries, has changed its malaria guidelines to advise the use of ACT.

“There are now diagnostic tests that are reliable, easy to use, and require just one drop of blood to give results in 15 minutes,” he added.

Obami also called for the provision of prevention tools such as insecticide-treated bed nets, reliable testing and treatment for malaria including making health services free of charge for patients in some cases.

“The necessary tools to fight malaria have been developed and should now be used and implemented,” Obami concludes.