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| **MEDIA RELEASE** |  *For Immediate Release* |

**ECOBANK AND THE GHANA HEALTH SERVICE UNDER THE NATIONAL MALARIA CONTROL PROGRAM (NMCP) CELEBRATE WORLD MALARIA DAY**

**Accra, Ghana – April 30, 2021.** Ecobank, in collaboration with the National Malaria Control Program and the Ministry of Health, on the morning of April 26th, 2021 organised a public forum to engage the Press, its customers and the general public on the adverse effects of Malaria on the health of the country’s populace particularly pregnant women and children who are mostly at risk, as well as the need for every individual to take up this fight to end Malaria.

Mr Dan Sackey, the Managing Director of Ecobank Ghana with responsibility for the Bank’s business within Anglophone West Africa, in a statement to the press indicated that, “eliminating malaria will increase prosperity across Africa over the long term, fostering a healthier workforce, spurring economic growth and reducing the cost burden associated with malaria. We are therefore delighted to announce our plans to launch the *Zero Malaria Business Leaders Initiative* to fully mobilize the private sector in service of malaria elimination.”

Speaking on the Managing Director’s behalf, Dr Edward Botchway, CFO and Executive Director of the Bank mentioned that the African Union and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, launched the pan African Zero Malaria Starts with Me movement across the continent in 2018. This was subsequently adopted by fifty-five (55) African governments, and an additional 19 countries have since launched the campaign, igniting grassroots movements that seek to engage individuals, families, communities, religious, business and political leaders as well as other concerned members of civil society to take full ownership of the fight to end the malaria scourge. In Ghana, he said Ecobank Ghana in collaboration with the Ecobank Foundation have effectively partnered with NMCP under the auspices of the Ministry of Health to accelerate combined efforts at eliminating this preventable and treatable disease. This partnership, he recalled, started earlier with Ecobank donating insecticide treated bed nets to the National Malaria Control Program.

In July 2020, the 2nd anniversary of the *Zero Malaria Starts with Me* campaign, a new initiative called the *Zero Malaria Business Leadership Initiative* (ZMBLI) was launched by the Ecobank Group and Speak Up Africa, a policy and advocacy action tank. The initiative aimed to promote the mobilization of resources from the private sector in order to sustainably finance the fight against malaria and to leverage the skills and influence of private sector leaders in this endeavor. ZMBLI has so far been launched in three francophone African countries, namely Burkina Faso, Benin and Senegal. Today, on World Malaria Day 2021, the Ecobank Group is proud to announce that Ghana will be the 1st anglophone country to be launching this initiative coming July 2021.

Despite an 89% decrease in malaria cases in Ghana between 2012 and 2020, malaria cases still remain high, with millions adversely affected every year. This ongoing epidemic severely affects the economy due to increased absenteeism both in schools and in workplaces, reduced productivity as well as an increase in health expenditure. Indeed, the GDP of malaria-endemic countries can be negatively impacted by up to 5-6%[[1]](#footnote-1), with an estimated $2 trillion USD in global GDP generated if malaria elimination is achieved by 2030.[[2]](#footnote-2) In order for the goal of malaria elimination to be achieved, the National Malaria Control Programme’ s ambitious National Strategic Plan (2021-2025) must be fully financed and supported. However, there is currently a US$412 million funding gap. The Ecobank Group, through the Zero Malaria Business Leadership Initiative, is therefore committed to leveraging the thriving private sector in Ghana to help close this resource gap and drive long term prosperity for all beneficiaries.

In his remarks, Dr. Patrick Kuma Aboagye, Director General of Ghana Health Service said; “On Sunday, 25th of April 2021 Ghana joined the world to commemorate World Malaria Day under the theme, Zero Malaria, Draw the line against Malaria. This theme ultimately, calls for the prioritizing of the malaria agenda, strengthening the collaboration among all sectors, and joining hands to ensure zero morbidity from malaria. We are today highlighting the status of malaria control programme implementation and giving opportunity to the media to interact and gain a better understanding of the strategies, activities and statistics of malaria control in Ghana. Malaria, as we all know, negatively impacts not only the health sector but other socio-economic segments as well. Thus, any intervention to reduce malaria, should be embraced and supported by all stakeholders.” He then implored the media to use their platforms to educate the public on the various forms of malaria mitigation plans by the Ghana Health service.

Commenting on the event, Mrs Rita Tsegah, Regional Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing at Ecobank said; “The aim of today’s event is to support NMCP and engage the Press, customers and the general public on the joint fight against Malaria especially in a COVID-19 regime and the urgent need to adapt to the changing times. We will continue to form alliances and mobilise resources against Malaria, focusing on vulnerable pregnant women and children who continue to be adversely impacted.” She concluded by indicating that Ecobank remains resolute in discharging this obligation through galvanising private sector participation and collaborating with partners such as National Malaria Control Program, the Ministry of Health and Speak Up Africa to change the narrative.

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**About Ecobank Ghana**

Ecobank Ghana is a subsidiary of the Ecobank Group, the leading independent pan-African banking group. The Ecobank Group employs over 15,000 people and serves about 20 million customers in the consumer, commercial and corporate banking sectors across 33 African countries. The Group has a banking licence in France and representative offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Johannesburg, South Africa; Beijing, China; London, the UK and Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. The Group offers a full suite of banking products, services and solutions including current and investment accounts, loans, cash management, advisory, trade, securities, wealth and asset management. ETI is listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchanges in Lagos, the Ghana Stock Exchange in Accra, and the Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières in Abidjan.

For further information on Ecobank, kindly visit [www.ecobank.com](http://www.ecobank.com)

1. https://www.malariafreefuture.org/malaria [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.malariabizalliance.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)