

7000 Malawians die of Malaria in 2007

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1 Aug 2008

Malawi's Health Minister, Khumbo Kachali yesterday disclosed that out of four million malaria cases Malawian hospitals dealt with in 2007, 7000 people lost their lives.

Alarmed by this figure Kachali said government is launching a mass campaign against the disease where they are going to distribute 1,1 million insecticide treated mosquito nets this year alone.

"We intend to reduce malaria related deaths in the country especially by providing pregnant women and under five children with treated mosquito nets," he said.

"Malaria accounts for 18% of all hospital deaths and 40% of outpatients visits. It also contributes to anaemia in children and is common cause for school absenteeism," he said.

South African music icon, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, who is UNICEF Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Malaria, will be taking a lead role.

"Malawi is on course of achieving the MDG on child deaths," declared Chaka Chaka during the pre-launch press briefing in Blantyre yesterday, "It is my passion to see to it that the beneficiaries are well sensitised on the usage of treated mosquito nets."

The distribution of the treated mosquito nets, together with activities to raise awareness on the importance of treated mosquito nets will be conducted by government together with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The launch of the campaign takes place on Friday in the lakeshore town of Mangochi, with the theme being "Malaria - a disease without borders."