

Sumitomo Chemical Quadruples Production of its Anti-Malaria Olyset® Net

Sumitomo Chemical, the world's largest Environmental Health insecticides manufacturer, announced today (10 March 2005) at 'Africa Live: The Roll Back Malaria Concert' that annual production of Olyset® Net – its Long Lasting Insecticidal Net (LLIN) – will grow from 5 million to 20 million per annum by the end of 2005.

The Olyset® Net, the product of innovative Sumitomo technology, was cited in a recent issue of 'Time' Magazine as 'one of the coolest inventions of 2004'.

The continuing scourge of malaria presents serious obstacles to African countries' growth and development. Every year an estimated 300 million people worldwide are infected with malaria, and Africa suffers the most with over 1 million deaths annually, the majority being children under the age of five. Sumitomo's LLIN is an essential tool for bringing about a significant reduction to this figure.

Sumitomo Chemical's objective is to ensure maximum availability for its LLINs throughout Africa, at an affordable cost. It has therefore taken the decision to transfer – on a license free basis – the technology for the manufacture of the Olyset® Net to interested parties in order to increase production capacity and improve the coverage of LLINs. Technology transfer leads to further cost reductions through improved distribution and also creates much needed local employment.

Mr S Oba, Senior Managing Director (Agricultural Chemicals Sector) said: "Our business philosophy is that our activities should not only benefit Sumitomo itself but also contribute to the welfare of global societies. Sumitomo Chemical is proud to be a member of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and I am especially pleased to announce the significant expansion of production of the Olyset® mosquito net.

"Worldwide demand for long lasting insecticide nets is increasing sharply: it has been a challenge to meet this demand and, crucially, to ensure a necessary supply at an affordable cost. Although the majority of Olyset.® Nets are being manufactured in Asia, we are committed to encouraging the development of Africa-based production facilities. To this end, we recently took the initiative to assist A to Z

Textile Mills Ltd. in Tanzania in starting up local manufacture. This has proved a major success and production is set to increase fourfold by the end of July 2005. We are now looking actively for more production partners based in Africa.”

“Local and worldwide media coverage of Roll Back Malaria’s ‘Africa Live’ concert – featuring some of the greatest West and Central African musicians, each of whom has a global following, is an excellent vehicle for highlighting the campaign to tackle the scourge of malaria. “

Professor Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Secretary of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, said: “Sumitomo’s announcement is evidence of a trend that will contribute hugely to fighting malaria: increasing private sector commitment. I commend Sumitomo and A to Z on boosting production to enable a greater number of people to protect themselves from malaria by sleeping under insecticide-treated nets. We stand ready to help ensure these nets reach those who need them most.”