

The Government of Rwanda announced today that it will host a global Summit on malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) on 25 June 2020, on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali.

The summit will be the first formal gathering to bring united global attention and calls-to-action to ending these preventable yet often deadly diseases that have plagued humans for thousands of years.

Each year more than 200 million people get sick and over 400,000 die from malaria, most of them young children in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr Diane Gashumba, Rwanda's Honorable Minister of Health said: "It is unacceptable that billions of people around the world continue to suffer and, too often, die from malaria and neglected tropical diseases. These diseases are preventable, treatable and curable."

She added, "The incredible progress against malaria and neglected tropical diseases is proof of what can be done with the resources at one's disposal, relevant policies, and a great deal of commitment. We can – and must – do more to ensure our youth, our communities and our countries aren't held back by these diseases of poverty and inequality."

Over the past two decades, countries around the world have made major inroads against both malaria and neglected tropical diseases – thanks to political leadership, innovation and increased funding to expand health care access at the grass roots.

Annually over 1 billion people have benefited from large scale treatment for at least one NTD for the last three years while almost 600,000 lives are being saved from malaria and 100 million malaria cases are being prevented compared to the year 2000 levels.

Dr Abdourahmane Diallo, Chief Executive Officer of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, one of the two major disease coalitions supporting the Summit, said: "Commonwealth countries make up over half of all malaria cases and deaths globally."

"The Kigali Summit will be a crucial moment for leaders to take stock of the progress countries are making towards delivering on the Commonwealth leaders' commitment made in London two years ago to halve malaria by 2023." he

explained.

For malaria, the summit is a crucial moment for leaders to deliver on the promise set by Commonwealth leaders at the 2018 CHOGM to halve malaria deaths and cases across the Commonwealth by 2023.

Achieving the Commonwealth commitment is crucial for reaching the global malaria targets for 2030, which aim to reduce malaria burden by 90% and eliminate the disease in at least 35 countries that had malaria in 2015.

The Kigali Summit on Malaria & NTDs will capitalize on the presence of heads of state of countries that represent almost two-thirds of the malaria and NTDs burden, as well as major donors and partners working to end these diseases.