



AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Senator the Hon Bob Carr

Media Release

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AUSTRALIA TO HOST HIGH-LEVEL MALARIA CONFERENCE

Australia will host a high-level conference in October to help combat the challenge of malaria.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Bob Carr announced the Malaria 2012: Saving lives in the Asia Pacific conference at the East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' meeting in Cambodia yesterday.

"Despite recent progress in tackling malaria, there are still more than 200 million malaria cases globally, with around 30 million cases in our region," Senator Carr said.

Malaria has a profound impact on some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our region causing 42,000 deaths in 2010 and leaving many more unable to work and care for their families. Malaria also threatens economic growth and business interests in the region.

"Gains in controlling and eliminating malaria are threatened by emerging drug resistance in the region.

"Addressing global health issues has been a priority for Australia at the East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' meeting and I am pleased that we will continue this work at the malaria conference later this year.

"The conference will provide an opportunity for Asia-Pacific leaders to build on our successes, protect the gains and further develop regional responses to malaria.

"It will also provide a forum to discuss how we can work together to combat emerging drug resistant strains in the region and explore ways of contributing to the global effort to eliminate deaths from malaria by the end of 2015, as called for by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon."

Australia has been working with developing countries in Asia and the Pacific regions to combat malaria. Australia currently supports the Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network and provides investments to save peoples' lives, including through funding treatment and the distribution of bed nets in Asia Pacific.

Our support has helped to achieve significant results in reducing malaria cases in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Since 2003, our investments have helped to reduce malaria cases by 70 per cent in the Solomon Islands and 85 per cent in Vanuatu.

Malaria 2012 will be held over three days in Sydney from 31 October – 2 November 2012. Representatives from governments and development partners across Asia and the Pacific will attend the conference along with leading health and development experts.

Senator Carr will host a ministerial meeting as part of the event with the UN Special Envoy for Malaria, Mr Ray Chambers.

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