

**Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN's) in Tanzania:  
Marketing challenges for the Public and Private Sector  
White Sands Hotel, Dar es Salaam, 5 - 7th May 1998**

**Executive Summary**

Malaria in Africa causes over one million child deaths a year. In Tanzania, malaria imposes an immense burden on health services, children's education, productivity and development. The goal of the National Malaria Control Programme in Tanzania is to reduce morbidity and mortality due to malaria by using improved case management of malaria, and pyrethroid treated nets for prevention. However a net alone is not sufficient for preventing malaria. Insecticide on a net reduces the chances of mosquitoes entering or biting through the net, which gives people better protection from malaria. Mosquito nets treated with pyrethroid insecticide (ITNs) are the most promising, available method of controlling malaria in the tropical world. Recent large-scale field trials have shown that treated nets reduce childhood mortality by 25%.

The White Sands Meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was convened in response to the overriding need to increase the demand for nets and insecticides and to ensure that there are adequate supplies to meet this demand. Clearly, the private and public sectors have to work together to answer this need. Overcoming the barriers to increasing supply and demand requires continual commitment and action by the many different players. Unfortunately, development and research projects have traditionally found it difficult to coordinate with the private sector, and in some cases, malaria control projects have had a detrimental effect on private sector efforts.

Tanzania has been a world leader in research into ITNs. The development of the "Dip-it-yourself" kit for home treatment is an example of one of Tanzania's innovations. Since 1992, when the government waived sales tax on ready-made nets, sales of nets in the country have increased steadily to reach half a million a year in 1997. The proposed addition of a 20% value added tax to nets in 1998 threatens the current growth in demand and supply of nets.

The purpose of the White Sands meeting was to promote the use of treated nets within Tanzania as part of the malaria programme, emphasizing cooperation and partnerships between the private and public sectors. The specific objectives of the meeting were:

- To provide a forum for key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to discuss important issues and coordinate activities.
- To ensure all partners are aware of the full impact of malaria, the benefits of ITN use, and the importance of their role in promoting them.
- To identify barriers and solutions to the supply and demand of ITNs.
- To develop a plan of action to increase the supply and demand of nets and insecticide.

One of the outcomes of the meeting was agreement amongst all the players involved that there is a need for cooperation, continual commitment, and action to achieve the goal of increasing and sustaining supply and demand of insecticide and nets in Tanzania. Three issues were identified wherein significant barriers exist that require immediate action (regulatory constraints, lack of awareness of malaria and the role of ITNs, and taxation), and plans of action were outlined for follow-up by the appropriate parties. This report summarizes the major issues discussed at the meeting, and outlines actions and responsibilities of the key stakeholders to address barriers to increasing ITN use, and can serve as a model for convening similar meetings in the African region.

