

Press Release

Paris, April 17th, 2009

PlaNNet Finance gets ready to fight malaria

An overview of PlaNNet Finance's actions for the occasion of the World Malaria Day, on April 25th, 2009.

Every year, over one million people die of malaria. Sub-Saharan Africa is the most affected region in the world, where a child under five years old dies of the disease every thirty seconds. Malaria considerably decreases the rate of economic development and, according to the World Bank, it causes an annual GDP loss of 12 billion dollars in Africa.

"Microfinance and health are closely related in the fight against poverty. Epidemics such as malaria have disastrous consequences on the economic situation of the affected populations, who are no longer able to continue their professional activity" explains Jacques Attali, President of PlaNNet Finance. *"With a network of microfinance institutions, in place in Africa for already several years, PlaNNet Finance has been working in the field, close to microentrepreneurs and their families, on outreach and information programs focusing on prevention practices."*

Thus in 2005, with the support of the Sanofi-aventis Group, PlaNNet Finance developed a malaria prevention program aimed towards microentrepreneurs in rural and urban areas of Benin. Supported by fifteen Beninese microfinance institutions (MFI), this two-year program has reached more than 120,000 people, MFI clients and their families, and increased their awareness on preventive actions and measures, such as the use of imbedded mosquito nets.

Today, PlaNNet Finance continues its partnership with Sanofi-aventis in Madagascar with a new three-year health program to fight against malaria. The program aims to improve the knowledge of MFIs' clients regarding preventive measures against the disease, to increase awareness concerning hygiene habits, as well as to develop new suitable products such as "health loans", and to evaluate the needs in health micro-insurance for underprivileged populations in order to facilitate their access to treatments.

PlaNNet Finance plans on pursuing its commitment in the fight against malaria and extend its outreach and prevention programs over Western Africa. PlaNNet Finance is also involved in the fight against AIDS with a program in Benin aimed at helping people living with HIV/AIDS gain access to microcredits, which would enable them to become or go back to being economically and socially active.

About PlaNNet Finance

PlaNNet Finance is an international non-profit organization with the mission to alleviate poverty through the development of microfinance, therefore increasing the unbanked and underbanked's access to financial services. Based in Paris, PlaNNet Finance's international network holds activities in close to 80 countries around the world. Over the past 10 years, PlaNNet Finance has supported 1,500 microfinance institutions.

www.planetfinancegroup.org