Dr Ben Rolfe, Executive Secretary, Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA)

Comments at the Press Conference.

Hanoi, 24 March 2015

Firstly let me add my thanks to the Government of Viet Nam for welcoming us here today.

Malaria has been National Health Targeted Programme in Viet Nam since 1991 and been a huge success. The money invested in malaria has shown clear impact. Malaria does not respect borders, and in reducing malaria at home, Viet Nam has also been a good neighbor to the region.

Securing the health of our people is of course a regional concern. We have all been shocked to see the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa.... It appeared so suddenly, and experts struggled to predict how the epidemic would spread.

This is the nature of health security threats – being prepared, and acting decisively is critical.

Viet Nam has acted decisively – the number of malaria cases has been pushed down by 90% in fifteen years, and the world is watching closely as the Government plans for elimination.

The Chairs of the Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance:

Prime Minister_Dung, and Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott – have each shown remarkable insight in guiding the region’s heads of state to eliminate malaria.

The recent official visit of Prime Minister Dung to Australia was a testimony to the close ties between the two countries.
In the past year, the two Prime Ministers reached out to other Leaders to inspire an unprecedented collective commitment: **To agree to the Goal of an Asia Pacific region of malaria by 2030.**

Viet Nam’s leadership on malaria stands as a good example of countries working together to shoulder responsibility for the health security of their people.

**Eliminating** malaria will require a truly united, regional approach... And has never been more important.

We now face a silent emergency in this region; there is a risk that the drugs we use to treat this dangerous disease may become ineffective.

If the most important treatment for malaria becomes ineffective we will surely see a devastating rise in malaria mortality globally. Mostly amongst children.

The Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN) is an important part of this joint action. Bringing together 17 countries in the Asia Pacific region with the common aim of eliminating malaria, APMEN is a platform for countries to share knowledge and to promote collaboration across-borders.

This week, we look forward to the APMEN annual meeting and again look forward to the leadership of Viet Nam in achieving an Asia Pacific free of malaria by 2030.