



a Zero Malaria Starts with Me awards ceremony, for instance, would increase its power to influence your advocacy targets.

Engagement on key dates. Provides a list of dates conducive to discussing malaria with policy makers and in the press. Prior to every World Malaria Day, for instance, international and domestic journalists are on the lookout for something unique to say about malaria. A statement made by a political leader on this date is more likely to receive coverage. Look at the tool for other dates that may be appropriate for your campaign.

Committing to malaria elimination: The Zero Malaria Starts with Me pledge. The pledge gives stakeholders the opportunity to publicly signal their support for the malaria fight. Publicizing their commitment rewards them for their participation and can increase the pledge's effectiveness.

Private sector engagement approaches. This tool describes approaches to engage private sector stakeholders for malaria elimination. As with the political engagement approaches (see above), many of these activities would be more effective if covered by the media or otherwise made visible.

Special events for community engagement. Describes different types of community engagement events and a list of days when it may be appropriate to organize them.

Community engagement through mass media. Describes approaches for sharing malaria messages and building community support through radio, television, and digital communications.

Press release

The press release is a fundamental tool for media outreach. It typically announces a range of news items, such as events, awards, new research or products, and programmes, and it follows a standard format. A downloadable press release template and sample press release can be found at www.zeromalaria.africa.

How well a press release is written is almost as important as the information it contains. Tips for writing a good press release:

- **Use a compelling title.** This is the first thing people see so make it compelling but also captivating. Ideally, it should contain seven words or less.
- **Start with a concise lead.** This is your first paragraph. The most important information comes first (e.g., what, when and where). Ideally, it should contain about 35–40 words, with supporting and background information in later paragraphs.
- **Frame and bridge.** Link the new information with something the readers know and care about to propel it into the public agenda. Follow the principles of what makes a newsworthy story (see above) and be careful not to repeat misconceptions or contradict someone's narrative with numbers.
- **Report and verify the facts.** Make the press release evidence-based. Your credibility depends on the accuracy of the information. Pick the most important and hard-hitting facts and stick to those. Be careful not to use too many facts and figures as it can confuse the reader.
- **Make a statement.** Include a quote from an influential person or a someone who was personally impacted by the news you are sharing to clarify your position and frame the issue you are writing about.
- **Keep it simple and elegant.** Use action words and active language, as well as simple sentences with common language. Avoid jargon and acronyms. Also avoid adjectives such as "outstanding" or "interesting" that convey opinion rather than fact. Use the same formatting for dates, names, abbreviations, etc.
- **Help media recognize and find you.** Use a media release template with your logo, tagline (if you have one) and business address. Include information about your organization and what it does as well as link to its website. Include contact information.⁹

Op-Eds and Human-interest Stories

Getting an opinion-editorial (op-ed) published is a powerful way to deliver your messages directly to the reader. It can be effective in grabbing the attention of your target audiences, including elected officials, business and community leaders, and target populations in the public. When evaluating op-ed submissions, newspaper editors look for pieces that are of interest to the public and exhibit

9 Adapted from: Roll Back Malaria Partnership. August 2014. RBM Advocacy for Resource Mobilization (ARM) Guide.