

Learning objectives

By the end of this module, you will:

- understand how political engagement can support anti-malaria efforts;
- understand common political engagement approaches;
- know how to lead an effective workshop with political stakeholders; and
- know how to use the Zero Malaria Starts with Me pledge to build commitment.

Section 1: The role of political support for malaria elimination

Success against malaria requires simultaneous high-level political support, the involvement of the private sector, and community ownership of interventions. African leaders have long recognized the importance of fighting malaria and its impact on health, economic growth, and social inequalities.

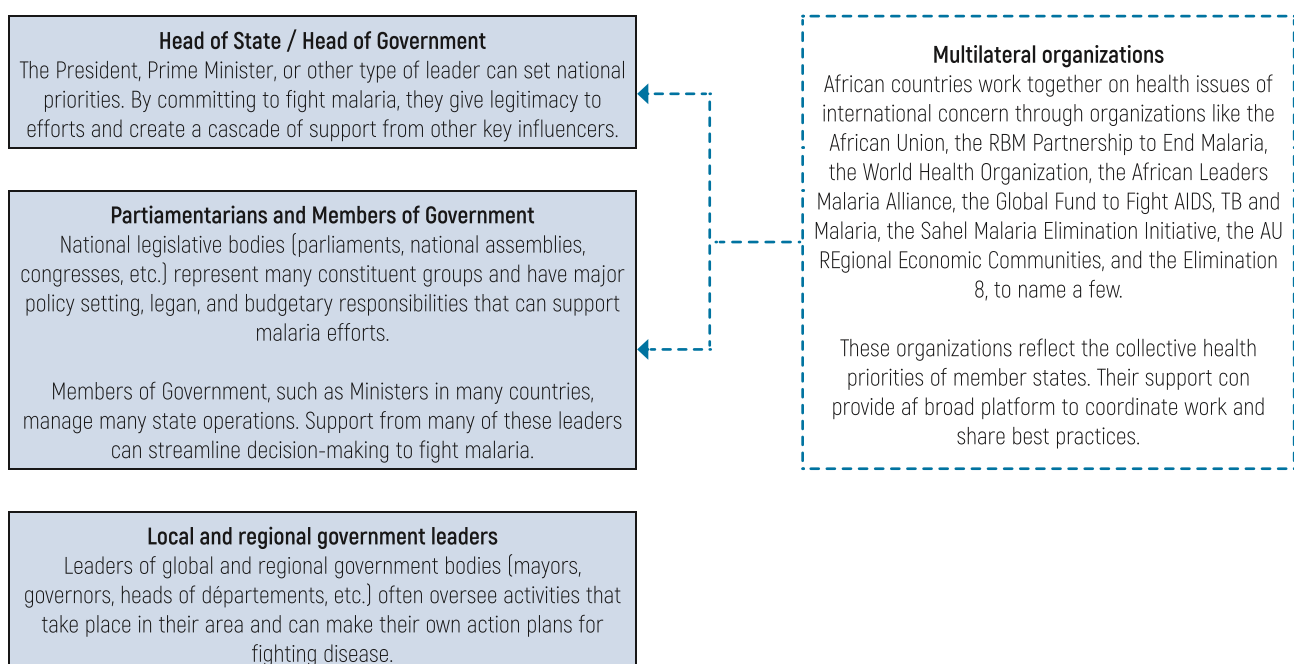
The Zero Malaria Starts with Me campaign can work at every level of politics, securing commitments from the highest levels of national and international organizations and down through other critical decision-makers with more specialized responsibilities. The diagram below shows how multi-level political commitment can contribute to the malaria fight in your country and across Africa.

The [ALMA Scorecard for Accountability & Action](#) is a resource to compare African countries' political commitment to fight malaria. The tool uses national data to help identify bottlenecks and take rapid action to meet malaria control and elimination targets. It tracks key indicators like commodity financing, coverage, implementation, and other indicators. It is updated quarterly and available in [English](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Arabic](#). Additionally, over 30 countries in Africa have developed country-owned malaria elimination and control scorecard management tools, tracking progress against key malaria targets and identifying action nationally and sub-nationally.

The African Union has made malaria elimination a priority. In 2016, the AU endorsed [The Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030](#). The plan recognizes that country ownership and leadership is the key for a malaria-free Africa and outlines a roadmap for ending malaria transmission as well as preventing re-establishment in all countries by 2030.

Global efforts are coordinated by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 (GTS). The GTS targets for malaria reduction and increased financing are a complement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and currently inform national and donor strategies.

Figure 6: Political engagement to fight malaria at different levels





Political leaders committed to the malaria fight can build a base of support for efforts that will make their work a national priority. When deciding to allocate scarce resources to public programmes, strong political will ensures that these programmes do not suffer from funding gaps that could stall progress or lead to a resurgence. Finally, success against malaria will often require cooperation with neighbouring countries. Through leading by example, governments motivated to reach zero malaria will inspire others to take the issue seriously.

Political engagement success stories

Across Africa, several examples demonstrate the power of high-level commitment in rolling out nation wide campaigns. In Zambia, President Edgar Lungu announced the country's first national strategy to eliminate malaria by 2021. This ambitious goal is the latest development in the country's long history of malaria innovation. It was among the first countries to pilot the "Scale-Up for Impact" approach, achieving high coverage of long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) and access to treatment beginning in 2005. Their motto, "malaria ends with me," is demonstrated in practice: approximately one-third of malaria funding came from domestic sources in 2016.

After successfully scaling up malaria prevention approaches nation wide, Senegal's National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) and partners were looking for new ways to ensure that communities used the tools to finish the fight. Among their early supporters was Minister of Health Awa Coll Seck, who used her position to build support for the campaign among Parliament, Ministers, and the mayors of Senegalese cities. This high-profile platform made it possible for the campaign to initiate partnerships with major companies and launch their approach at community health facilities.

In 2018, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni launched Mass Action Against Malaria (MAAM), a national campaign to make Uganda malaria-free. As part of the campaign, Uganda committed to increase dedicated domestic funding for malaria and hold a Parliamentary Forum on Malaria to improve the existing legal framework for malaria programmes.

A number of countries are already working to form national End Malaria Councils; a multi-sectoral, high-level council of individuals convened by the head of state or government or senior leader, as applicable, to oversee the journey towards malaria elimination (see Figure 7). Its primary focus is ensuring sufficient resources are available to achieve this goal including:

- keeping malaria elimination high on the political and developmental agenda;
- sustained social mobilization including a grassroots movement to end malaria;
- increased and sustained malaria financing including domestic funding and the use of innovative financing; and
- engaging the private sector to play a significant role in ending malaria

Section 2: Political engagement tools

This section contains guides and tools that you can use to launch and implement your campaign among political stakeholders. Some of the material here was developed by the Senegal NMCP and their partners and was used successfully to build momentum for the malaria fight.

Political engagement approaches for malaria

Political engagement can help your campaign influence decision-makers to support malaria goals. If you used the [Stakeholder Analysis tool](#) in Module 1 and the [Supporters and opponents map](#) in Module 2, then you already have a strong idea of who you will need to contact and how difficult it will be to change their views.

In general, the high-level policy-makers you will engage with have many competing priorities. They are constantly being solicited by citizens and interest groups to support or oppose various positions. Consider your time with them precious. You will need to make an impression through brief but impactful evidence-based statements that link to what most interests them. See the [Message development](#) guide in Module 2 for more about how to communicate effectively.

Political engagement takes time. Impressions are made and opinions changed over multiple interactions, preferably using a variety of formats. Here are a few tactics you can use to get the attention of decision-makers and persuade them to commit to the campaign:

Schedule an in-person meeting: Despite all of the electronic communication tools now available, the best way to make an impression is still in person. It may be difficult to meet with individuals that are particularly high-up in the political world unless you have a connection to them. If you are able to schedule a formal meeting, come prepared with messages tailored to their interests, bring a few resources, such as factsheets or one-page briefings about the campaign to share with them, country malaria control