

New fund promises low-cost malaria treatment

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(AP) -- A \$225 million fund to provide low-price anti-malaria medicine around the world was launched in the Norwegian capital Friday to fight a disease that kills 2,000 children a day.

Malaria kills more than 880,000 people a year, at least 85 percent of them are children and most victims are in Africa, said Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere.

New [drug](#) combinations have been developed to treat strains of malaria that have become resistant to the old remedies, but they cost 10 to 40 times more and are available to only 20 percent of those with the disease, according to a statement from the new body, the Affordable Medicines Facility for Malaria.

The program will cut the cost from \$6 to \$10 per treatment to between 20 and 50 cents by negotiating price cuts with [pharmaceutical companies](#) and through subsidies from international donors.

"The age when the world had effective drugs against [infectious diseases](#) but let millions die ... because they couldn't afford them is over," said Stoere.

The program will start in 11 countries - Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda - and later be expanded worldwide.

The Affordable Medicines Facility for Malaria was launched by Roll-Back [Malaria](#), a public-private partnership that includes UNICEF, the World Bank, the governments of Norway, the Netherlands and Britain, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Clinton Foundation.

On the Net:

<http://www.government.no>

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