

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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# Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and United Nations Foundation to Announce \$45 Million Campaign to Fight Malaria

WHAT: Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the United

Nations Foundation will host a joint news conference to announce an

unprecedented partnership and discuss the role of churches and other faith-based

organizations in fighting malaria in Africa

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. Monday, June 27, 2011

WHERE: Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, 1345 Gratiot Avenue, Detroit

**WHO:** Distinguished speakers will include:

- Rev. John Nunes, President and CEO, Lutheran World Relief, and co-author, *Little Things Make Big Differences: A Story About Malaria*
- Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
- Michael Pajonk, United Nations Foundation
- Gloria Edwards, Co-Chair, Lutheran Malaria Initiative
- Nicolas Demey, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Caroline van der Veen, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Speakers will be available for interviews following the news conference.

#### WHY:

Malaria, a preventable and treatable disease, continues to devastate communities and perpetuate a cycle of poverty. According to the World Health Organization, nearly a million people die of malaria each year and every 45 seconds a child dies in Africa. In many communities where Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) work, extreme poverty creates conditions that allow malaria to take hold and spread with deadly consequence.

The Lutheran Malaria Initiative, a partnership of Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and made possible through support from the United Nations Foundation (UNF), aims to mobilize Lutherans in the United States to help end malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. Both LWR and the LCMS have a long history of working to alleviate suffering and reduce poverty in rural communities around the world, and through the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, we can leverage the reach and power of the Lutheran network to make a significant impact through education, prevention and treatment of this devastating disease.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

**Rev. John Nunes**, president and CEO of Lutheran World Relief, has also been a parish pastor and community organizer in Detroit. With his wife Monique, he co-authored the book *Little Things Make Big Differences: A Story About Malaria* (Concordia Publishing House), to educate children in the U.S. about what they can do to help protect children in Africa from this deadly disease.



**Dr. Matthew C. Harrison,** the newly elected president of the 2.4-million-member Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, previously served as executive director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, the church's mercy and disaster relief ministry. His work has included the coordination of the church's multi-million dollar responses to Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in Asia and the earthquakes in Haiti and Japan.

**Michael Pajonk** is Director, Organizational Partnerships with the United Nations Foundation, where he manages the UN Foundation's Malaria Partnership with civil society organizations, including the Lutheran Malaria Initiative.

Gloria Edwards, co-chair of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, currently serves as the vice-chair of LWR's board of directors. She has held a number of leadership roles within the LCMS, including serving as president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, the church's women's auxillary, and she has served as vice-chair of the board of directors for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

**Nicolas Demey** is a Corporate Partnerships Officer at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. He is working with the UN Foundation to build partnerships with faith-based organizations in the U.S.

**Caroline van der Veen** is a Campaign Officer at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, where she manages partnerships with external fundraising partners and private donors.

## **ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS:**

### **Lutheran World Relief (LWR)**

Lutheran World Relief is an international nonprofit organization that works to end poverty and injustice by empowering some of the world's most impoverished communities to help themselves. With partners around the world, LWR seeks to promote sustainable development with justice and dignity by helping communities bring about change for healthy, safe and secure lives; engage in Fair Trade; promote peace and reconciliation; and respond to emergencies. LWR is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, and has worked in international development and relief since 1945.

LWR is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), individuals and parish groups in international relief, development, advocacy, and social responsibility.

# The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a mission-oriented, Bible-based, confessional Christian denomination headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Founded in 1847, the church body, which ranks as one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, has more than 2.3 million baptized members in some 6,200 congregations and more than 9,000 pastors. In addition, the LCMS owns and operates KFUO radio, two seminaries, and 10 colleges and universities. Its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America.

The LCMS has relationships and active mission work in some 88 countries around the world and, in the last five years, has awarded more than \$35 million through more than 900 domestic and international grants for emergency response and disaster relief. Today, the LCMS is in full doctrinal fellowship with 33 other confessional Lutheran church bodies worldwide and is a founding partner of Lutheran Services in America, a social ministry organization serving one in every 50 Americans.

#### The United Nations Foundation (UN Foundation)

The United Nations Foundation, a public charity, was created in 1998 with entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner's historic \$1 billion gift to support UN causes and activities. The UN Foundation is an advocate for the UN and a platform for connecting people, ideas and resources to help the UN solve global problems. They build partnerships, grow constituencies, mobilize resources and advocate policy changes to support the UN's work for individual and global progress. The Foundation's work—focused on select global problems—is decreasing child mortality, improving

disaster relief, protecting diverse cultures and environments, creating a clean energy future, empowering women and girls, and improving U.S.-UN relations.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (The Global Fund)

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was created in 2002 to dramatically increase resources to fight three of the world's most devastating diseases, and to direct those resources to areas of greatest need. The Global Fund's purpose is to attract, manage and disburse resources to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Since 2003, the fund has awarded more than 350 grant programs in 132 countries and disbursed more than \$2.7 billion. Programs funded by the Global Fund have distributed more than 122 million treated bed nets and administered over 142 million treatments for malaria.

**FOR MORE** 

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