

Request for Malaria Control along with the Promotion of irrigated Rice Cultivation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Malaria is one of the three major infectious diseases in the world, and there were estimated 240 million malaria cases and approximately 630 thousand malaria deaths worldwide in 2020. Young children are particularly susceptible, and about two-thirds of the deaths in sub-Saharan Africa, where the threat is concentrated, are in infants under the age of five. In recent years, in addition to the risks of global warming and climate change, it has been pointed out that progress in malaria control could be reversed with the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2019.

Furthermore, there is deep concern that the environmental changes caused by the promotion of rice cultivation from the perspective of economic development and food security in sub-Saharan Africa, may lead to an increase in malaria prevalence.

At the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008, the Japanese government set a goal of doubling rice production in Sub-Saharan Africa in 10 years' time, and in fact, this goal was achieved in 2018. In the TICAD process, which determines Japan's policy for Sub-Saharan Africa, the promotion of irrigated rice cultivation and expansion of its production can be said to be one of the main features of the supporting policy in the region.

While the promotion of irrigated rice cultivation plays an important role in Africa's economic development, we will continue to support the promotion of irrigated rice cultivation paying due respect to the relationship between the promotion of rice cultivation and a risk of fostering the spread of malaria. We therefore request the Japanese government to take henceforth the following actions into consideration when rice cultivation is to be promoted.

- 1 JICA (Japan international Cooperation Agency) should survey, monitor and evaluate (SME) the risk of malaria epidemics caused by ecosystem and environmental changes including the effects of climate change, and incorporate necessary countermeasures through the CARD (Coalition for African Rice Development) initiative in Sub-Sahara Africa.**
- 2 Strengthen PPR (prevention, preparedness, and response) and ensure health security in the areas where malaria epidemics are newly expected due to the expansion of irrigated rice cultivation. This includes the development of an early warning system and infection control measures (diagnosis, treatment, and vector control).**
- 3 Establish a comprehensive programme of joint research between agriculture and health sectors to develop anti-mosquito methods of growing rice.**