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For Immediate Release

TO ALL MEDIA HOUSES

PRESS RELEASE

NEW MOSQUITO SPECIES FOUND IN GHANA

The Ghana Health Service has received confirmation of the presence of a new mosquito vector, *Anopheles stephensi*, in the country. The new vector was confirmed in March 2023, from samples taken in Tuba and Dansoman, in the Greater Accra region, as part of the routine malaria surveillance system and vector control monitoring done across the country through designated sentinel sites.

The World Health Organization, in 2019, issued an alert on the invasion of Africa by a malaria-transmitting mosquito, *Anopheles stephensi*. Until 2011, the reported distribution of *Anopheles stephensi* was confined to certain countries of South Asia and parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Since then, the vector has been identified in Djibouti (2012), Ethiopia (2016), Sudan (2016), Sri Lanka (2017), Somalia (2019), and most recently Nigeria (2020) and Yemen (2021).

Anopheles stephensi is a unique vector known to breed in a myriad of sources such as ponds, swamps, marshes, artificial containers, and other man-made container spots. It can practically breed in almost all water sources, some of which are not the traditional breeding sites of the common *Anopheles* species, particularly in urban areas. The vector also survives in extremely high temperatures during the dry season when malaria transmission usually declines. It is known to spread fast and adapt to different climatic conditions posing challenges to its control.

As a response to this finding, a task force has been formed to advise and coordinate the following needed actions.

1. Enhance larval source management nationwide, especially where *Anopheles stephensi* were detected.
2. Enhance vector surveillance on *Anopheles stephensi* per the updated vector control guideline.
3. Improve the country's laboratory and human capacity to identify *Anopheles stephensi*.
4. Collaborate with WHO to update the Vector Map.
5. Intensify community engagement and sensitization at all levels.

The Ghana Health Service entreats the public to ensure the following:

1. Source reduction:

- a. Ensure the removal of water collection points in and around their homes and communities to minimize the breeding sites for this new mosquito species.
- b. Cover all water containers to avoid mosquito breeding.

2. Mosquito bite prevention

- a. Use insecticide-treated nets to protect themselves against indoor mosquito bites.
- b. Personal Protection: Use repellants and wear clothing that protects from mosquito bites outside their homes.
- c. Screen doors and windows of rooms

The Ghana Health Service calls on all partners to support in intensifying sensitization, particularly on environmental management, to reduce breeding sites for all forms of mosquitoes in our communities whilst we continuously monitor the spread of *Anopheles stephensi* mosquitoes in the country.

We wish to assure the public that the Ghana Health Service, together with all stakeholders, will work assiduously to curtail the impact of *Anopheles stephensi*.

SIGNED
DR. PATRICK KUMA-ABOAGYE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

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