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Africa hails Egyptian innovation By Salwa Samir-The Gazette Online Thursday, January 20, 2011 04:38:08 PM

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CAIRO - In order to highlight Egypt s support for African countries, the Foreign Ministry has recently held a seminar entitled: An Egyptian Innovation for Malaria Control in Africa .

Mona Omar, Egypt s Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs

It was attended by many of African ambassadors to Egypt and media people, who were invited by Mona Omar, Egypt s Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs.

Malaria is one of the world's most deadly diseases, threatening 3.2 billion people in at least 108 countries, according to the World Health Organisation, said professor of photochemistry at Cairo University Mahmoud Hashem.

Malaria is a female mosquitoborne infectious disease, widespread in tropical and subtropical regions, including parts of the Americas (22 countries), Asia and Africa. After a period of between two weeks and several months (occasionally years) spent in the liver, the malaria parasites start to multiply within red blood cells, causing symptoms that include fever and headaches.

In severe cases, the disease worsens, leading to hallucinations, coma and death.

It is the main cause of poverty and lack of development.

According to the WHO, more than 1 million people die each year from malaria, while more that 350 million people are affected by the disease, he told the gathering.

In 2006, the WHO endorsed DDT, a synthetic pesticide, to fight malaria, but it may have a variety of human health effects.

Meanwhile, Egypt has come up with a radical solution to the problem, which it has already applied in Ethiopia and Sudan.

It is effective, efficient, highly safe and environment-friendly, stressed professor Hashem, who is also the President of the German University in Cairo (GUC), established in 2003.

According to him, a report from the Sudanese Ministry of Health about the application of this technique in the Blue Nile Province says: The Egyptian technique is capable of fighting malaria and is environment-friendly. Other living organisms in the same swamps are not affected by it. The extract used was obtained by Innovative Research and Development [INRAD] Egypt from a variety of natural plants from different places.

This scientific finding is the fruit of 38 years of scientific research by a team led by prof. Hashem, who has supervised 62 doctoral and Master s theses and published 81 scientific research papers. He also has eight patents for different applications, which are helping to solve most of the health

and environmental problems in Africa.

One of the patents is for the registration of the results, obtained in a field study in the swamps of Uganda, conducted in co-operation with the Ugandan Ministry of Health, with financial support from the Egyptian company Multipharma, which was founded in 1992 and has many branches in Africa.

After listening to the presentation, the African ambassadors hailed the innovation and invited the

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research team to visit their countries.

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It s a great and impressive idea, said Ambassador of Cameroon Mohamadou Labarang. I suggest holding a demonstration so that people can realise how important this technique is, he told **The Egyptian Gazette.**

You can t imagine the situation in Cameroon and other African countries because of malaria. With the cooperation of the Egyptian Government, we will solve the problem, he added.

This innovation is in high demand in many African countries. Supported by the Egyptian Government, it will help boost relations between Egypt and Africa, said Ambassador Omar, stressing the importance of scientific research, benefiting not only Egypt but also the other African countries.

At the same event, Mona Omar of the Foreign Ministry announced that two Egyptians have won African Union scientific awards ??" Galal el-Gemeie, the Dean of the Faculty of Science, Helwan University, and professor of urology Ahmed Abdel-Rahman.

The awards will be presented to them at the next African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the end of this month, she added.

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