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## MCC Helps Sustain Eradication of the Guinea Worm

For ages, Ghanaians relying on stagnant water for their main drinking supply risked contracting Guinea worm disease. As the worm breaks through the skin, the parasite-borne disease leads to a painful infection a year after contamination, complete with fever and swelling, leaving its victims unproductive and unable to invest in their economic well-being.

That's because the pain from Guinea worm disease prevents Ghanaians from attending school, tending livestock or working their fields for weeks—or even permanently. It often forces children to fall behind in their studies and adults to lose their jobs. For families and communities dependent on agriculture, the effects of Guinea worm disease can be devastating, especially during harvest time.



The new supply of potable water will not only reduce water fetching time but also improve peoples' health through the elimination of Guinea Worm and other water-related infectious diseases

Until recently Guinea worm had been eradicated throughout the country, except in parts of northern Ghana. Through its \$547 million compact with Ghana, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), along with local and international partners, is helping to ensure the long-term eradication of Guinea worm in the north by promoting awareness about the disease, training water and sanitation officers and expanding access to potable water in rural areas.

The eradication drive is part of the compact's \$6 million Tamale water extension project, which supplies safe drinking water to 18 communities in the Tamale metropolis, Savelugu-Nanton district and Tolon-Kumbungu district—including many communities historically afflicted with Guinea worm.

This includes the residents of Chanzeini, a village in the Tamale metropolis, who never had access to safe drinking water. For years, women and children had to cross a busy highway to reach a dam. They then stepped barefoot into the reservoir's dirty water, often next to livestock, to fetch water, potentially exposing them to Guinea worm.



Because of MCC's investments, Chanzeini now has a standpipe residents use for safe, clean drinking water. This improvement benefits residents of Chanzeini and other communities in key ways. Relieved of the daily burden of traveling far to fetch water, they now have more time to devote to work and studies. No longer forced to drink dirty water, their health is improving. And in Chanzeini's case, children no longer risk injury by crossing a busy highway to fetch water. In total, the compact paid to install 75 new water points in northern Ghana, including Chanzeini.

The Tamale Water Extension Project (TWEP) entailed the provision of water supply facilities for communities with a history of Guinea Worm in addition to Farmer Based Organization (FBO) communities. In this instance, MCC collaborated with the Carter Center and other stakeholders in the provision and management of water supply facilities, including the construction of 10.6KM pipelines and the construction and/or rehabilitation of 55 public standpipes serving 7 communities.

More than 131,000 people in Ghana's northern zone are expected to benefit from MCC water projects over 20 years. MCC's Guinea worm investments build on the work of the Carter Center, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the Ghana Ministry of Health. The country's last reported case of Guinea worm occurred in May 2010. Fourteen months later, Ghanaian Vice President John Mahama declared that transmission of the worm had been broken. The World Health Organization will monitor Ghana through 2013 before providing final certification of eradication.

In another generation or two, the hope is that the specter of Guinea worm will be no more than a distant memory.