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Sarah Obama picked to lead tsetse fly fight

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By George Olwenya

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US President Barack [Obama's](#) grandmother is to lead the fight against tsetse flies in Siaya District, as part of a new drive to rid Africa of the deadly insect. Tsetse fly causes sleeping sickness.

Mama Sarah Obama, 87, will lead a campaign to spray more than 3,000 livestock said to be under threat of tsetse attack in the district.

The granny's new role became apparent after senior officials from the African Union donated chemicals and spraying pumps for the exercise to her at her home in Kogelo village.

Sleeping sickness

The officials heading the Pan-African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (Pattec) said they had targeted Mama Sarah to boost the war against sleeping sickness that was still being experienced in African states, including [Kenya](#), due to the presence of tsetse flies.

Led by the head of Pattec coordination office, Dr Solomon Haile Mariam and the Nyanza Provincial Veterinary Officer Stephen Orot, they said the move was a continuation of the declaration made by African Heads of State in 2000 in Togo, to ensure eradication of tsetse fly in the continent.

Mariam said the exercise targeted Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mali, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Mama Sarah told the delegation she was impressed by the project and promised to ensure animals in her home and Kogelo were sprayed.