

Recommendation No 2

**Elimination of dog-mediated human rabies by 2030 in Africa – national strategies,  
legal framework, tools to track the progress**

**CONSIDERING:**

1. Africa suffers around 40% of the world's human rabies cases (estimated at 24000/year), with the majority being children, and mainly affects people living in rural areas, and PEP are essential for the prevention of human deaths;
2. The challenges faced by Africa for vaccine procurement and vaccination coverage due to the inaccessibility to free-roaming dogs not only in rural but also in urban areas;
3. Ministries responsible for animal health are mainly focused on economically important animal diseases which affect livestock productivity thus, canine rabies control and dog population management are often neglected;
4. With the global framework set out for rabies elimination in humans, 'Zero by 30: The Global Strategic Plan to end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030', the existing global and Regional coordination mechanisms offer many benefits and opportunities to support WOA Members in engaging on rabies control ;
5. WOA endorsement of official control programmes is an international recognition of the capacity of the Veterinary Services and other competent authorities to control dog-mediated rabies in line with International Standards and best practices. Namibia is the first country from the African region to have WOA endorsement of its official dog-mediated rabies control programme;
6. Systematic mass dog vaccinations, dog population management, post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and advocacy are the key elements towards dog-mediated rabies elimination;
7. WOA Rabies vaccine bank was established in 2012 to facilitate the procurement of high-quality dog vaccines at special negotiated prices, with a limited constraints. It is an entry point to the rabies elimination roadmap, helping countries to implement vaccination campaigns. In 2022, almost 800,000 rabies vaccine doses have been delivered to Members from the Africa Region through WOA vaccine bank to support and encourage systematic mass dog vaccinations. Additionally, WOA has updated the standard on dog population management to support Members in achieving better vaccination coverage in dog populations;
8. Veterinary Services play a key role in addressing health risks linked to rabies through coordinated activities with other relevant public institutions and agencies. Thus, it is crucial to strengthen the animal health workforce and especially those involved in carrying out service delivery to animal owners and livestock keepers in remote areas by increasing capacity-building programmes targeted towards vaccinators, community animal health workers, and veterinary paraprofessionals. Veterinarians and laboratory professionals are also encouraged to improve their understanding of rabies prevention and control programmes;
9. Various tools and training programmes are available for Members to support the management, implementation and monitoring of the rabies control programmes which are in line with the Global Strategic Plan "Zero by 30" through the United Against Rabies Forum, the Tripartite, and other stakeholders; and
10. Rabies is a WOA - listed disease and Members have the obligation to regularly notify WOA in compliance with the requirements of the *Terrestrial Code* regarding the notification of diseases and provision of epidemiological information on their rabies situation in domestic and wild animals. Despite rabies being a notifiable disease in many Members, there is still under reporting of both animal and human rabies cases.

## THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

### RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBERS:

1. Nominate a 'National Rabies Point of Contact' with the main responsibility to advocate for a rabies elimination policy, monitor the implementation of the national strategic plans or official rabies control programme for dog-mediated rabies elimination in their country and support the regional coordination;
2. With the support of WOAHA Regional and Subregional Representations, WOAHA Reference Laboratories, the Tripartite partners and UAR forum update or develop a national strategic plan or official rabies control programme for dog-mediated rabies elimination based on One Health approach, utilising the UAR Forum roadmap and available tools, while including a sustainable operational plan with adequate financial resources;
3. Are encouraged to submit official control programmes for dog-mediated rabies for WOAHA endorsement, in compliance with the relevant chapters of the *Terrestrial Code* notably for the vaccination programmes and the management of dog populations, to prioritise rabies elimination at national level;
4. Scale up dog vaccinations by using high-quality vaccines in a strategic manner and promote responsible dog ownership for a successful dog population management programme in order to achieve vaccination of at least 70% of the at-risk dog population; and consider the support of the WOAHA vaccine bank;
5. Advocate for more sustainable commitment, leadership and coordination by governmental authorities to prioritise rabies control and mobilise policymakers from health, veterinary, and allied sectors at national and local levels to ensure availability of resources and therefore, sustainability in rabies control;
6. Commit to working in partnership with multi-disciplinary agencies, the private sector, local communities, civil society, regional and international organisations following the One Health approach, to accelerate progress towards elimination of dog-mediated human rabies by 2030. This can be done through media campaigns, stakeholder meetings, partnerships with organisations and local communities;
7. Advocate for Public health authorities to ensure accessibility and availability of human post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for animal bite cases and promote integrated bite case management to prevent human deaths from rabies;
8. Strengthen diagnostic capacity of their National Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory to perform confirmatory diagnostic test according to WOAHA international standards and, when necessary, request the support of WOAHA Rabies Reference Laboratories, including through WOAHA laboratories twinning program.
9. Enhance laboratory-based rabies surveillance by establishing routine testing of suspected animals, and improve transparent data sharing between human and animal health sectors and reporting of animal and human rabies cases by using standard case definitions for reporting to national authorities and to WOAHA and WHO;
10. Take advantage of the evaluation and capacity building WOAHA processes and tools such as the Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway programme with Rabies Specific Content, the National Bridging Workshop on Rabies and the Stepwise approach for Rabies Elimination (SARE). These tools will empower the Veterinary Services via a systems approach and building capacity in the One Health space;
11. Veterinary Services establish a coordination mechanism with public health authorities and local authorities to coordinate rabies elimination activities and raise the profile of rabies through the annual observation of World Rabies Day.