



Food and Agriculture  
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## Workshop on Enhancing Progress Towards Rabies Elimination ‘Zero by 30’ in the SAARC Region

26-28 June 2019

Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Considering that:

1. Seven out of eight SAARC Member States are considered rabies endemic contributing to about 45% of global burden of human rabies.
2. Rabies has been identified as priority model disease for the operationalization of One Health approach in SAARC Member States.
3. Elimination of dog-mediated human rabies is a regional public good that will require strong regional coordination.
4. Dog-mediated human rabies elimination is achievable through sustained mass dog vaccination, access to post-exposure prophylaxis, public awareness, and strong surveillance as shown from experiences in Latin America and Europe among others.
5. Dog-mediated human rabies elimination is a shared responsibility that requires ownership, leadership and One Health approach at regional, national and sub-national levels.
6. Dog-mediated human rabies elimination is a priority for the Tripartite (WHO, OIE, FAO) that in collaboration with GARC and other international partners are committed to support some Member States towards achieving zero human death by 2030 through various activities.
7. There is a good progress made by some of the SAARC Member States since the last SAARC Rabies Workshop held in Colombo in 2015 in terms of accessibility to PEP, enhanced mass dog vaccination, laboratory diagnostic capacity and education and awareness programmes including dog bite prevention and responsible dog ownership (e. g. on World Rabies Day).
8. The stepwise approach towards rabies elimination (SARE) assessment and Practical Workplan towards Rabies Elimination (PWARE) work planning have been carried out in 6 SAARC Member States preceding this workshop which helped to identify strengths and gaps and develop a tailored work plan for each country.
9. All rabies endemic SAARC Member States have introduced and expanded cost-effective intradermal rabies vaccination to improve availability, accessibility and affordability of human rabies vaccine.
10. Expansion of rabies diagnostic laboratory network and introduction of integrated bite case management are critical to make appropriate decisions on PEP and rational use of human rabies vaccines.





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11. Availability of high quality dog rabies vaccines is a critical factor for successful dog rabies control and SAARC Member States are concerned about procurement procedures that allow for the purchase of substandard dog rabies vaccines.
12. The cost and availability of WHO pre-qualified human rabies vaccine is a concern.
13. OIE laboratory twinning project initiated in 2016 in Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fishery Sciences University, is a step forward for designating it as an OIE Reference Laboratory in South Asia.
14. Three SAARC Member States have already revised national guidelines for human rabies prophylaxis as per new WHO Guidelines (2018) while others are in the process of revision.
15. There are strategies, frameworks, tools, guidelines, technical publications, etc. available in the public domain for use by SAARC Member States for technical guidance and capacity building towards rabies elimination (e. g. SARE/Rabies blueprint).
16. Sufficient resource availability will be critical for rabies elimination and global partnership between donors, rabies endemic countries and relevant corporate entities will be instrumental to secure resources for achieving the zero by 30 goal.

**The workshop recommends that the SAARC Member States:**

1. Finalize and endorse National Action Plan for rabies elimination with the involvement of national stakeholders based on SARE/PWARE assessment results in alignment with existing policy and strategy no later than December 31, 2020.
2. Make Rabies a notifiable disease in both human and animal sectors in all member states including harmonization of rabies case definition in line with OIE/WHO guidelines no later than December 31, 2020.
3. Pursue high level advocacy at national level to garner political commitment to achieve rabies elimination by 2030.
4. Scale up mass dog vaccination using high quality vaccines in a strategic and phased manner to achieve at least 70% dog vaccination coverage.
5. Establish and/or utilize One Health coordination mechanism at national and sub-national levels to ensure effective and sustainable coordination for implementation of rabies elimination programme.





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6. Use available regional/ sub-regional platforms to garner support from SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC) towards rabies elimination.
7. Make best use of FAO/OIE/WHO Reference Laboratories for building/strengthening national laboratory diagnostic capacity including participation in proficiency testing and external quality assurance (EQA) assessments/evaluations.
8. Access and utilize global strategies, tools, guidelines and technical support made available by organizations such as WHO, OIE, FAO, GARC, World Animal Protection and other partners (e.g. the SARE/Rabies Blueprint).

### The Workshop recommends the Tripartite and partners:

1. Support the development of a project proposal for the SAARC Rabies Elimination Project in consultation with the SAARC Secretariat and SAARC Member States for funding by the SDF.
2. Support the development and implementation of the National Action Plan and regional road maps for elimination of dog mediated rabies in the SAARC region.
3. Support One Health laboratory-based rabies surveillance training program including harmonization of standards, networking and EQA.
4. The OIE to maintain dog rabies vaccine bank and facilitate access to SAARC Member States.
5. Organize a rabies elimination regional coordination meeting in 2021 with the objective to assess progress and planning.
6. Continue to develop, as the United Against Rabies collaboration, ZEROBY30, the Global Strategic Plan for the elimination of dog mediated human rabies by 2030. In particular, this strategy should support mechanisms to channel the necessary resources for rabies elimination

### The Workshop recommends the SAARC Secretariat/SAARC Development Fund (SDF)/SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) that:

1. The SAARC Secretariat to organize high-level advocacy meetings at ministerial level (Health and Agriculture/Livestock) to seek political commitment for rabies elimination.
2. Prioritize Rabies elimination in SAARC under the One Health approach and establish a technical committee / working group / task force.





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3. The SAARC Secretariat/SDF to encourage SAARC Member States to utilize social window funding from SDF by submitting a project proposal on regionally coordinated rabies elimination and SDF and SAARC Secretariat to explore possibility of funding the rabies elimination project for the region.

