

A day dedicated to rabies in the Asia and the Pacific Region



Mass dog vaccination in Bhutan © Department of Livestock, Bhutan

The OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations in the Asia and the Pacific Region (AP Region), together with their Regional Tripartite partners (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO] and World Health Organization [WHO]), have organised a webinar to take place on World Rabies Day (WRD) on 28 September 2020 to rededicate ourselves to enhancing our efforts towards the elimination of dog-mediated human rabies by 2030.

Rabies is endemic in both humans and animals in the AP Region. With over 95% of human rabies cases being associated with dog bites, rabies control and subsequent elimination necessitates a multi-sectoral collaboration, using a One Health approach.

In the past couple of years in the AP Region, in order to keep the momentum to achieve the global goal of 'Zero by 30', the OIE, in collaboration with its Regional Tripartite partners (FAO and WHO), organised sub-regional meetings for Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Members in Ha Noi, Vietnam, in December 2018 and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Members in Kathmandu, Nepal, in June 2019. The Regional Tripartite also organised webinars on WRD in September of 2018 and 2019, and most recently the SAARC Rabies Webinar in May 2020. These activities were organised with the main objective of keeping actions on rabies prevention and control high on the agenda for Members. Some of the priority actions identified in these meetings and webinars included: maintaining political engagement; focussing on dog vaccination; making human post-exposure prophylaxis accessible and affordable; enhancing intersectoral coordination; improving dog population management to control increasing numbers of free-roaming dogs; enhancing awareness and community engagement; and mobilising resources.

Although rabies is a 100% preventable disease, it continues to kill tens of thousands of humans and animals in the AP Region and therefore it is important to continue to advocate for sustainable actions at the national level. World Rabies Day, observed on 28 September every year, is a day dedicated to bringing the focus back to rabies as a neglected zoonosis and in committing collective actions to tackle this dreaded disease.

As in the past, this year, the Regional Tripartite is rededicating its efforts on rabies elimination efforts, by organising a webinar on WRD. Selected Members will present their experiences and good practices on risk communication, disease surveillance and vaccination to encourage similar actions in the region. The Regional Tripartite will provide updates on the global progress and developments in human prophylaxis.

The targeted audience for this webinar is the focal points or people taking the lead in rabies control and elimination activities (animal, human, wildlife/environmental sectors) in Members within the AP Region as well as representatives from other organisations working on rabies, partners, donors and the general public.

The webinar will be hosted on Zoom [here](#) and also livestreamed on YouTube [here](#).

Following the webinar, we encourage Members to share their experiences of this year's WRD and any communication materials on rabies which can be posted on our regional website: <https://rr-asia.oie.int/en/projects/rabies/> for wider dissemination.

For further information please contact us at rr.asiapacific@oie.int.

We wish to thank Dr Kinzang Dukpa, Regional Project Coordinator, OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific, for submitting this article to the OIE News Team.

■ September 2020