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ASSURING QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RABIES DOG VACCINATION PROGRAMMES: VACCINATION – RABIES SURVEILLANCE – POST-VACCINATION MONITORING

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Canine rabies is responsible for approximately 55,000 human deaths each year with more than 99,9% reported in Asia and in Africa. Each human death is entirely preventable since vaccines and other biologicals are available. Canine vaccination programmes appear as the effective tool to control rabies in those countries where dog is the reservoir and vector of the disease. The ultimate objective of rabies vaccination strategy is to prevent rabid animals from transferring rabies virus to humans, to protect them if exposed to rabies virus and to interrupt the transmission from one animal to another one. To be efficient, the vaccination coverage should be 70%, in most cases this level is not achieved because dog rabies control is not a priority. The knowledge of the local dog population is a pre-requisite to efficient rabies control policy. This knowledge is also useful to control other dog mediated diseases as hydatidosis, and leishmaniosis. Information campaigns about rabies and its control increase awareness and contribute also to the success of dog vaccination programmes.

In areas where regular and long term control efforts target dog thanks to strong commitment from national authorities, current mass vaccination programmes are successful and elimination of canine rabies is nearly achieved. A number of WHO consultations have been organized since several decades and concrete recommendations and road maps are available for planning, implementing and evaluating the strategy of rabies control in dog populations. Three large-scale rabies elimination projects (KwaZulu Natal, Tanzania and Philippines) supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in cooperation with WHO were initiated in 2009 aimed on mass vaccination of 3 million domestic dogs. Approaches towards dog rabies control using effective rabies surveillance network and vaccination strategy will be detailed and discussed.

