WVA and WMA Joint Press release

The World Veterinary Association (WVA) and the World Medical Association (WMA) have joined forces to mark World Rabies Day (September 28) by calling for human rabies transmitted from unvaccinated dogs infected with rabies to be totally eradicated by 2030 in collaboration with the “End Rabies Now” campaign initiated by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control. It has been estimated that rabies kills more than 60,000 people every year, about 40 per cent of whom are children less than 15 years old. It is a disease more prevalent in poor communities.

Dr. René Carlson, President of the World Veterinary Association, states: ‘Rabies is one of the deadliest diseases we know. Yet rabies is preventable if several measures are followed. Some of these measures include mass vaccination programs of dogs, humane population control of dogs through spay and neuter programs, community education about rabies and dog bite prevention, the importance of dog bite medical treatment, and availability of rabies vaccine therapy after exposure. We currently have the tools to prevent this devastating disease and eliminate the suffering of both dogs and people who contract this essentially fatal disease. Eradicating rabies is not an option. It is a public health necessity.’

She points out that when a person is bitten by a suspect rabid animal, that person must seek immediate medical care and be evaluated for rabies vaccine therapy. If possible the animal that bit the person should be examined, quarantined at an appropriate location, or euthanized for rabies virus infection verification by a qualified laboratory. Once symptoms of rabies appear, the disease is nearly always fatal. Canine vaccination and responsible pet ownership are essential measures to avoid this fate.

Sir Michael Marmot, President of the World Medical Association, states: ‘Many countries and communities have taken the right measures to prevent or eradicate rabies. But unfortunately the disease still kills many children in poor rural communities. Rabies is a disease that is very much dependent on living conditions. So improving living conditions and fostering public health services will save many lives.’

Join the WVA and WMA in celebrating the World Rabies Day 2016, raising awareness about Rabies worldwide and to collaborate with the “End Rabies Now” campaign to eradicate Rabies by 2030.