



LESOTHO

NEWSBRIEF – THE COMMEMORATION OF WORLD RABIES DAY 2012

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World Rabies Day for 2012 was commemorated in Lesotho at Manthabiseng Convention Centre under this year's global theme;

“Working Together to make Rabies History”.

The event was organized by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and was graced by the presence of Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Lits'oane, Deputy Minister of Health Dr. Nthabiseng Makoae, Director General in the Ministry of Health, WHO Country Representative, Dr. Mufunda, government officials, media institutions, schools and the victim of rabies disease.

In her statement, the Honorable Deputy Minister, Dr. Nthabiseng Makoae emphasized that rabies disease should be one of the diseases of Public Health concern as it is indicated that 55,000 people die every year and most of them are children under the age of 15.

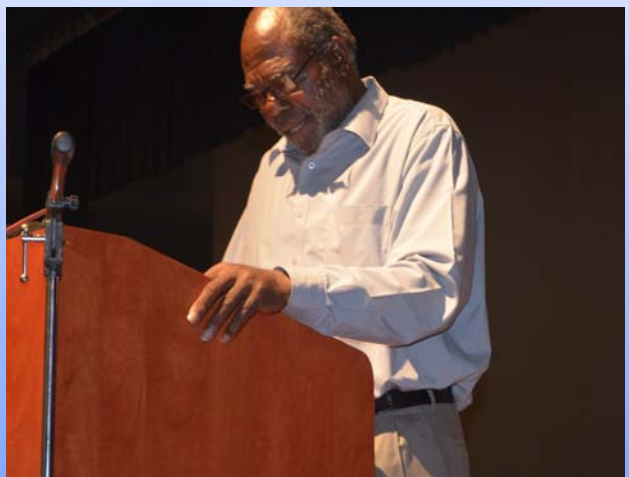
Dr. Makoae advised the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to work jointly with the Ministry of Health to inform the communities about animal diseases and prevention for promotion of good health.

She made a plea especially to students to take care of themselves especially boys because they like dogs and urged them to bring their livestock to vaccination centers.

Speaking at the same occasion, the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Lits'oane Lits'oane indicated that as the Ministry of Agriculture, they worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to celebrate the rabies day to raise awareness about the impact of human and animal rabies and to promote ways of curbing it in animals. He urged the public to work together to fight the disease through adequate animal vaccination and control so that unnecessary deaths from rabies are prevented.



Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Nthabiseng Makoae presenting her remarks during the celebration.



Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Lits'oane Lits'oane making remarks during the day.

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Dr. Jacob Mufunda, WHO Representative, delivering his speech on day.



The public listening attentively to the speeches with Dr. Moteetee in front seat.

During his remarks, WHO Representative, Dr Mufunda indicated that world rabies day is marked to raise awareness about the impact of rabies both in animals and humans, how to prevent rabies, measures that could be put in place to eliminate the main sources.

He further highlighted that rabies is a fatal disease that spreads to people through close contact with saliva of infected animals through bites and scratches, therefore it is important to seek immediate medical attention as rabies in humans is 100% preventable through prompt appropriate medical care. He emphasized that WHO will continue support the country in implementing the integrated disease surveillance and response strategy that will among others be tackling diseases such as rabies and support advocacy and research to break the "cycle of neglect" affecting rabies prevention and control particularly in Lesotho in collaboration with other partners.

Dr. Mpolai Moteetee put more emphasis on the status of rabies on human health, indicating that rabies affects the central nervous system and the symptoms included fever, headache, and may progress to confusion, difficulty swallowing, hallucinations, paralysis, and agitation. Treatment after a bite will include one dose of immune globulin and five doses of rabies vaccine, given over a 28-day period. Dr Mpolai Moteetee indicated that, there are safe and effective vaccines available for people who have been bitten by an animal that might have the disease, but usage in Lesotho is low due to the high cost.

Speaking at this event, the Director of Livestock Services, Dr 'Marosi Molomo said it is the responsibility of livestock owners to protect their animals from diseases such as rabies through vaccination. Dr Molomo expressed concern over the low coverage of vaccination of dogs and cats against the disease, saying that animals that are not vaccinated are a health hazard to human beings. The event closed with singing of National Anthem by police band.

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Army band entertaining the crowd.



Students listening attentively to the speech.



Dogs waiting for vaccination.



Dr 'Marosi Molomo preparing the vaccine.



The Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Lits'oane and WHO representative to Lesotho, Dr. Mufunda, vaccinating dogs during the event.

