

# **Press Release: Health Action International Receives €460,000 Grant from Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Fight Snakebite Death & Disability in Sub-Saharan Africa**

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Health Action International (HAI) was today awarded a €460,000 grant from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to scale up advocacy and education for the prevention and treatment of snakebite in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia.

The two-year grant will enable HAI to train civil society organisations in sub-Saharan Africa to collect and analyse snakebite data, then use this evidence to lobby for greater regional, national and international action. HAI will also work with these civil society organisations to teach local populations effective methods to prevent and treat snakebite.

“We are grateful for the support of the Dutch government and look forward to working in partnership with them in tackling snakebite,” said Tim Reed, executive director of Health Action International. “The Netherlands is the first Northern government to recognise snakebite as a true global emergency that is devastating victims, families and communities.”

Over the past year, HAI has provided advocacy and strategic support to the Global Snakebite Initiative, an Australian-based NGO of scientists specialising in the prevention, first aid and treatment of snakebite. This collaboration has resulted in increased global awareness of snakebite, particularly at the World Health Assembly and the World Health Organization.

In addition to capacity building and awareness-raising, the cash injection from the Dutch Ministry will allow HAI and the Global Snakebite Initiative to seek additional longer-term funding to sustain the programme, expand it into additional countries, and begin increasing the knowledge and capacity of national health authorities in preventing and treating snakebite.

Funding for HAI’s two-year snakebite programme was available with reserved funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Policy Framework on Dialogue and Dissent. Last year, the Framework awarded €5 million to the Health Systems Advocacy Partnership, comprised of Amref Flying Doctors/Amref Health Africa, the African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST), Health Action International and Wemos to improve sexual

and reproductive health and rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Facts about snakebite:**

- At least 5.5 million people are bitten annually by a venomous snake.
- Snakebite kills 125,000 people a year and severely injures two to three times that amount.
- One-third of snakebite victims live in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has the second-highest snakebite burden in the world.
- People who live in poor, rural communities with failing healthcare systems—particularly agricultural workers, herders and children—suffer the greatest burden of snakebite.
- Snakebite can cause paralysis, suffocation, bleeding disorders that may lead to a fatal hemorrhage, irreversible kidney failure, blindness and severe tissue damage (necrosis) that requires amputation and causes permanent disability.

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