

 **EMBASSY STATEMENT ON RIFT VALLEY FEVER IN KENYA**

Following the recent outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in Kenya, the Embassy of Kenya in Brussels wishes to issue the following statement to allay any fears tourists and other travelers to Kenya may have.

Rift Valley Fever (RVF) is a viral disease that affects mainly animals and in rare occasions humans. The disease is frequently reported following heavy rainfall and floods. It's mainly transmitted from animals -sheep, cattle, goats and camels- to humans through close contact with infected animals such as handling meat and body fluids and consumption of raw milk.

Management of RVF in humans is mainly through supportive treatment as there is no definitive cure for RVF. Control of RVF in humans is through control of the disease in animals through a sustained vaccination program and limiting human-animal contact. Already, the Government of Kenya has embarked on a massive vaccination campaign in the affected areas. Use of insecticide treated nets and mosquito repellants can also reduce infections in humans.

The disease is not widespread in Kenya as the media would like to portray. The initial cases of suspected RVF were reported in villages in Garissa district, a remote northern province in Kenya, in mid December 2006. Other areas affected included Ijara, Kilifi and Tana River districts. The outbreak is under control despite the current scare in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city. The Nairobi scare may be attributed to migratory flow of people from the isolated areas of the country to the capital. The scare is therefore unjustified in circumstances where one is not exposed to any of the above risk factors.

Visitors to Nairobi have no risk of contracting RVF and those traveling to other areas in Kenya should not handle sick animals and should sleep under a mosquito net and use insect repellent. It is safe to eat meat and meat products in licensed eateries and drink milk from certified sources (e.g. pasteurized packed milk from supermarkets and shops).

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