MEETING OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

Paris, 26 May 2008

The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas met on 26 May 2008 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris at 2.30 p.m. The meeting was attended by 109 Delegates and observers from 24 Members of the Commission and one observer country, and representatives from 11 international or regional organisations.

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay.

Observer countries/territories: Spain

International/regional organisations: ALA, AVMA, CIRAD, ICFAW, IDF, IFAH, IICA, OIRSA, PAHO-PANAFTOSA, World Bank, WVA

Dr José Ángel del Valle Molina (Mexico), Vice-President of the Regional Commission, opened the meeting and was followed by Dr Emerio F. Serrano Ramírez, Vice-President of the Regional Commission and Dr Víctor Góngora (Belize), Secretary General of the Regional Commission.

Dr José Ángel del Valle Molina welcomed the Delegates and representatives of international and regional organisations, in particular the Agriculture Minister of Belize, the Deputy Agriculture Minister of Cuba, and the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America.

Dr Jamil Gomes de Souza (Brazil), President of the Regional Commission, then joined the meeting and took over the chair.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, given in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted and the annexes relating to agenda items were circulated to all participants.

63 ALA: Asociación Latinoamericana de Avicultura (Latin American Poultry Association)
64 CIRAD: Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development)
65 ICFAW: International Coalition for Farm Animal Welfare
66 IDF: International Dairy Federation
67 IFAH: International Federation for Animal Health
68 IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
69 OIRSA: Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (Regional International Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health)
70 PAHO: Pan American Health Organization / PANAFTOSA: Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center
2. Administrative Commission update

Dr Carlos Correa Messuti (Uruguay), Vice-President of the Administrative Commission and Delegate of Uruguay, reported on the matters discussed at Commission meetings.

He discussed the importance of the OIE World Animal Health and Welfare Fund.

He reported that the OIE would be signing a cooperation agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

He reminded participants of the OIE mediation mechanism for settling disputes between countries regarding sanitary criteria for trade in animals and animal products and urged Members to make use of this mechanism.

Dr Brian Evans (Canada), member of the Administrative Commission, supplemented Dr Correa Messuti's presentation with information on the work of the Administrative Commission, saying that in September 2008 the Administrative Commission would begin work on drafting the OIE Fifth Strategic Plan 2011-2015, reason why it was important to discuss this item at the Conference of the Regional Commission of the Americas due to be held in Cuba in November 2008.

He said that elections for members of the Specialist Commissions and the Administrative Commission would be held in 2009 and that the region should propose candidates. He added that Dr Correa Messuti would become OIE President with the support of the other regions.

3. Contributions of Members to the OIE

Dr Brian Evans, member of the OIE Administrative Commission, and Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, reported that there had been an increase in the number of Members responding positively to the Director General's request.

He thanked Argentina and Panama warmly for hosting the offices of the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas and the Sub-Regional Representation for Central America, respectively.

He welcomed the fact that, in general, OIE Members in the Americas were complying with their contribution obligations, and urged Members with outstanding contributions to settle their arrears as soon as possible.

4. Organisation of the 19th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, to be held in Cuba from 17 to 21 November 2008

Dr Emerio Serrano Ramírez, Delegate of Cuba, reminded the Regional Commission of his country’s invitation to host the 19th Conference of the Regional Commission in Havana, from 17 to 21 November 2008, and reported on the conference venue and organisational details.

He said that the technical item to be presented at the Conference was ‘Biotechnology and its Application to Veterinary Science’ and that the technical visit would be to an Engineering and Biotechnology Centre.

5. Recommendations of the 18th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas (Florianopolis, Brazil, 28 November to 2 December 2006)

Dr Barcos reminded the Regional Commission of the Recommendations approved at the 18th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas in Florianopolis and subsequently endorsed by the 75th General Session of the OIE International Committee, on
‘Animal Welfare’ and ‘Compensation Mechanisms’. Dr Barcos reported that the Recommendations were being followed as part of the Regional Representation’s activities.

6. Activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Commission and the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas

Dr Jamil Gomes de Souza, President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, presented the Regional Commission’s activities over the past year.

Dr Luis O. Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, summarised the Regional Representation’s activities, including the changes to the website. He highlighted the interinstitutional agenda and the list of OIE focal points.

He spoke in particular of the Regional Representation’s ongoing work in support of regional foot and mouth disease programmes, including the recommendations of the latest meeting of the GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in August 2007.

He also discussed the support from countries in the region for economic cost/benefit studies of Veterinary Services.

Dr Barcos went on to present the work programme for 2008-2009, highlighting amongst other activities the Animal Welfare Workshop to be held in Panama, in preparation for the Global Conference in Cairo; the seminar to be held by national laboratories in all countries to identify common needs and assistance possibilities; and a workshop on compensation mechanisms to be held in Panama next July.

He also reported on a plan for translating the reports of the Specialist Commissions and Ad Hoc Groups into Spanish, in draft form, to better enable Spanish-speaking Members to comment on those reports.

Both the report and the work programme were approved.

7. Activities and work programme of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Central America

Dr José Oreamuno, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Central America, summarised the activities of the Sub-Regional Representation and also presented the work programme for 2008-2009.

8. Animal welfare

- Reminder on the outcome of the Animal Welfare Congress held in Montevideo

Dr Carlos Correa Messuti, Delegate of Uruguay, reiterated the outcome of the Animal Welfare Congress held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 24 and 25 April 2007.

- OIE Inter-American Animal Welfare Meeting

Dr José Oreamuno, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Central America, presented the OIE Inter-American Animal Welfare Meeting, to be held in Panama City, Panama, on 19 and 20 August 2008 to discuss and prepare a joint regional strategy for the Global Conference in Cairo.

- Second Global Conference on Animal Welfare

Dr L. Stuardo, Deputy Head, OIE International Trade Department, presented the Second Global Conference on Animal Welfare, to be held in Cairo, Egypt, from 20 to 22 October 2008. He pointed out that the Conference would focus on the application of OIE animal
welfare standards and would be based on the practical experience of a number of countries in the matter.

He said that full information on the Conference could be found on the OIE website.

The Delegates would shortly be receiving an official letter of invitation from the Director General of the OIE.

9. Proposed Technical Item to be included on the agenda of the 78th General Session of the OIE International Committee, to be held in May 2010

The Regional Commission proposed the following Technical Item to be included on the agenda of the 78th General Session (based on a questionnaire sent to Members):

‘The changing role of Veterinary Services in the management of aquatic animal diseases to support sustainable production and international trade’

10. Proposed Technical Item to be included on the agenda of the 19th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas (17–21 November 2008)

Following discussions and suggestions, the Commission selected the following Technical Item (not involving a questionnaire):

‘Members’ implementation of OIE international standards’.

11. PVS evaluations update in the Region

Dr Gastón Funes, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, reported on the status of the OIE programme for evaluating the performance of Veterinary Services using the OIE-PVS tool. He also described the specific status of the Americas region. He said that, based on the results of this first diagnosis, the next step would be to analyse any gaps or weaknesses and to prepare priority investment projects, for which the OIE would work in close collaboration with its partner organisations, such as FAO, and with international donors, with the ultimate objective of strengthening Veterinary Services worldwide.

12. Outcome of the 1st OIE Regional Seminar on Communication

Ms Maria Zampaglione, Head of the OIE Communication Unit, presented the OIE’s current communication activities and stressed the importance accorded to communication in the OIE Fourth Strategic Plan.

She discussed the successful Communication Seminar that had been held in Buenos Aires in November 2007. As a result of the Seminar, the OIE would be convening an Ad Hoc Group in September to develop the subject of Communication and Veterinary Services.

Dr Luis Barcos presented the recommendations of the Communication Seminar, which were approved by the Commission.

Participants were reminded that the OIE would be staging the World Veterinary Day in 2008 jointly with the World Veterinary Association.

13. WAHIS/WAHID – Progress on its implementation by Members in the Region – Progress on the Regional WAHIS agreement between OIRSA and OIE

Dr María Cristina Ramirez, Chargée de mission to the OIE Animal Health Information Department, presented an overview of the global implementation of the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and described the status of its implementation in the region.
Dr Ramirez also presented data on animal disease information for 2007 and 2008 (six-monthly and annual reports). She clarified that the OIE expects its Members to submit the six-monthly reports one month after the end of the period; this period is extended to 45 days for the annual report. Finally, she stressed the need for CVOs to ensure a transition when there is a change in the national focal points. She encouraged the Delegates to check the accuracy of the digital maps presented in WAHIS.

She stressed the good overall compliance of countries in the region. She reiterated to non-complying countries the importance of submitting their reports on time.

She reported that three training workshops had been held for the Americas region, and mentioned a few problems that some countries had experienced with implementing the system and with OIE support.

She discussed the status of the Agreement with OIRSA for the implementation of the Regional WAHIS, which would be signed at this year's General Session.

14. Relevant standards to be amended during the 76th General Session

Dr Alex Thiermann, President of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, stated that the report on the Code amendments to be adopted would be submitted in due course and asked whether any country had doubts or questions. There were no comments on the matter.

Dr Alejandro Schudel, Vice-President of the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (SCAD), reported that it would be of greatest benefit to postpone the discussion on the proposed changes to September, after sending out the report for comments. He described the proposed revisions prepared by the SCAD, for which the respective resolutions would be presented at this year's General Session.

He also reported on current SCAD activities, including assistance to the member countries of the MERCOSUR Standing Veterinary Committee (CVP) in implementing a Regional Programme to control foot and mouth disease in border areas.

The Delegate of Panama reminded the participants that in the past a number of Members had asked the OIE to include Newcastle disease and classical swine fever in the list of diseases for which the OIE officially recognises the disease status.

15. OIE Collaborating Centres and Reference Laboratories

Dr Carlos Correa informed on the following OIE Collaborating Centre and Reference Laboratories that the countries had presented for approval and that were approved by the Administrative Commission, stressing their importance in providing technical support for the countries in the region:

- Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Biotechnology in Cuba;
- Reference Laboratory for foot and mouth disease in Argentina;
- Reference Laboratory for American foulbrood in Argentina.

The Delegate of Chile reported that he presented for approval a Collaborating Centre for Animal Welfare in Chile. He added that his country was working on a twinning project for a Reference Laboratory for infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) virus.

The Regional Commission approved these suggestions.
16. Comments on the OIE Steering Committee for the Spanish language

Dr Fernando Crespo León, from Spain, Secretary of the OIE Steering Committee for the Spanish Language, presented the work of the Steering Committee and the respective Ad Hoc Group.

He pointed out that the translation of the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals into Spanish was already complete, saying that it had been published on the OIE website and that a printed version would be sent to the Members.

He provided detailed information on the contributions made by Members represented on the OIE Steering Committee for the Spanish Language in support of the translation projects.

He discussed the Framework Agreement concluded between the OIE and Spain’s Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA), as well as other ongoing projects in connection with the agreement that would be signed shortly.

17. Presentations from regional Organisations in the Americas that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE

- **PAHO-PANAFTOSA**

  Dr Albino Belloto presented PAHO-PANAFTOSA, its objectives, structure, principal actions and mechanisms used, international coordination bodies, alliances and partnerships with regional and sub-regional organisations. He highlighted the three main areas of cooperation in which PANAFTOSA is working: foot and mouth disease, food and zoonoses.

  He reiterated the need for good regional coordination.

  He reminded participants of the forthcoming meeting of the Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health (RIMSA), to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 11 and 12 June 2008, and invited all those present to attend.

- **IICA**

  Dr Ricardo Molins, IICA Director of Agricultural Health and Food Safety, presented the activities that IICA is carrying out in cooperation and coordination with other organisations at regional level, in particular assistance to countries in the region.

- **OIRSA**

  Dr Mara González Ortiz, Animal Health Specialist, OIRSA, presented her organisation’s activities, highlighting collaboration with other organisations and technical assistance to its member countries.

  She also emphasised a number of collaboration projects with the OIE.

18. Other matters

- **Latin American Poultry Association (ALA)**

  Dr Ariel Mendes described the structure and objectives of the ALA.

  He discussed the recent creation of the Inter-American Committee on Avian Health (CISA), whose members come from both the official and private poultry farming sectors of all the countries in the Americas.

  He described the work of CISA in providing input for the revision of OIE standards.
He called on the Regional Commission for a formal Agreement to be concluded between the ALA and the OIE.

Dr Barcos replied that he would consult with the Director General and the Administrative Commission on the possibility of concluding an agreement with the ALA.

- **World Veterinary Congress in Vancouver**

  Dr John Drake, President of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, announced the 29th World Veterinary Congress to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in July 2008 and invited all those present to attend.

- **Meeting of the OIE Inter-American Committee on Aquatic Animal Diseases**

  The Bureau thanked the Delegate of Mexico for holding the forthcoming meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Aquatic Animal Diseases in Mexico in September 2008. The OIE Regional Representation for the Americas would support the organisation of the meeting.

- **Guide for Shrimp Pathology and Immunology**

  The Delegate of Panama discussed the drafting of a Guide for Shrimp Pathology and Immunology, which had been printed and has been made available to the Members free of charge.

  Dr Barcos said that the guide would be published on the website of the OIE Representation for the Americas so as to make it available to Members and for general distribution.

- **World Foot and Mouth Disease Conference**

  The Delegate of Paraguay reported that his country had agreed to host the first World Foot and Mouth Disease Conference to be held by the OIE jointly with FAO in April 2009.

The meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.
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- IICA
- OIRSA

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