

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE

Bernard Vallat

OIE - Director General

In the context of the OIE global programme for supporting compliance of veterinary services with standards on quality using the “OIE PVS Pathway”, funded by the World Fund for animal health and welfare, the OIE organised this Global Conference, with the theme ‘Modernising Veterinary Legislation for Good Governance’. One of the conference objectives is to raise awareness of the need for appropriate legislation as an essential part of the national veterinary infrastructure. Appropriate legislation is needed for good governance and effective administration and management of the veterinary domain, both public and private sector. Appropriate human and financial resources for its implementation are also critical.

In 2008, the OIE published the first global Guidelines on Veterinary Legislation on its website. They identify the technical elements of the veterinary domain and recommend the points that legislation should cover. The OIE does not prescribe the model or the content of national legislation as this must be tailored to the national legal, political and cultural situation. At this conference, the OIE intends to launch a global conversation on the needs of Members for help in updating their veterinary legislation. When following the OIE PVS Pathway, a country may choose among others to make a national initiative on strengthening veterinary legislation concurrently with a PVS GAP analysis. The development of a national strategy for veterinary services is an important first step in seeking to update the national legislation; in this case, ‘form follows function’.

Participants will identify and discuss the main challenges and speakers will present information on the tools needed to encourage closer harmonisation of national legislation with international standards and guidelines. Another objective of the conference is to give practical guidance on how OIE Members (particularly developing countries) can mobilize governments and donors to give their support to the modernization of national veterinary legislation in line with international standards. It must be emphasized that this is essential to improve governance of the veterinary domain and that veterinary services are a global public good.

The OIE Initiative to improve veterinary education globally is complementary to this work on legislation, as both topics are important to better governance of the veterinary domain. The recommendations of this conference, and the results of the OIE’s ongoing work on veterinary education, will be presented at the 79th OIE General Session in May 2011. Noting the relevance of legislation to management of the veterinary domain, in 2011 OIE Members will be asked to consider adopting new technical standards on that topic in the *Terrestrial Code*.

Implementing veterinary legislation in line with international standards and guidelines will help countries to comply with international obligations while improving animal health, food safety and livestock production - thereby improving food security and helping to alleviate poverty.

Keywords: OIE– veterinary legislation– OIE PVS Pathway– Veterinary Services – World Fund for animal health and welfare.