

Second Global Conference of OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres Paris (France), 21-23 June 2010

PRESENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

B. Vallat

Director General, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), 12 rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France

The OIE, the World Organisation for Animal Health, which was created in 1924 to prevent animal diseases from spreading around the world, has, since then, enlarged its mandate to include the improvement of animal health and welfare worldwide. The OIE continually adapts its strategy, which is supported by its 176 Members to address their needs, as a changing world requires reactivity and scientifically and technically sound solutions.

Through its standard-setting activity, the OIE is recognised as a reference organisation by the World Trade Organization (WTO). All OIE Standards are based on science, adopted democratically by Members and published in the OIE *Codes* and *Manuals*.

To assure scientific excellence, the OIE builds its expertise on a network of globally recognised Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres that also play an essential role in prevention, detection and control of animal diseases worldwide.

Recognising the crucial role of this network, the OIE organised the First Global Conference of OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres, which was held in Florianopolis, Brazil, in December 2006. Since that time, the number of Reference Laboratories has risen from 160 to 186, and the number of Collaborating Centres from 20 to 35, now covering 133 diseases or topics.

This rapid evolution also reflects the growing challenges faced by OIE Members and the resulting expectations towards the OIE with regard to new and emerging diseases. Recent publications confirm that an estimated 75 per cent of new human diseases originate in animals and an average of two new animal diseases with cross-over capabilities emerges every year.

It is largely recognised that animal diseases need to be tackled at the source and this cannot be done without functioning Veterinary Services. The OIE has undertaken important steps to help Members to improve governance, legislation and capacity building to be ready to face new animal health threats including zoonoses. The OIE also strongly advocates collaboration among human and animal health communities to be better prepared for the future.

The new strategic plan covering the years 2011 to 2015 will strengthen OIE's ability to respond to these new challenges with the help and support of its Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres.



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