

ASSURING TRANSPARENCY

- **Ben Jebara K.**
Head, Animal Health Information Department, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), 12 rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France

Transparency of the world animal health situation, a major goal of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), is increasingly important given the growing risk of pathogens being spread through international movement of animals and animal products. Yet many problems stand in the way of full transparency, particularly when it comes to diseases in wildlife. The OIE has therefore stepped up its efforts to improve disease notification. Major improvements include networking with OIE Members, establishment of the single list of diseases notifiable to the OIE, introduction of the online disease notification system (WAHIS), ongoing development of WAHIS-2 and WAHIS Wild, introduction of national wildlife focal points, reporting of positive laboratory findings by OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres, and an active search procedure for unofficial information. Changes are also being made to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code to distinguish between diseases that have implications for trade when they occur in wildlife and those that do not. Furthermore, the outbreak maps in the World Animal Health Information Database (WAHID) now clearly distinguish between outbreaks in domestic animals and those in wildlife. These and other changes introduced by the OIE have helped to enhance the level of transparency in animal disease reporting worldwide. Yet much work remains to be done. It should be remembered that 80% of emerging diseases in humans are of animal origin and 70% of the pathogens involved are of wildlife origin. Thus, the OIE's Wildlife Disease Notification System has an important role to play in fulfilling one of the OIE's main goals, namely to ensure transparency, safe trade of animals and their products and a better knowledge of the worldwide animal health situation in both domestic and wild animals, for the benefit of animal health and human health.

