

Contribution from Veterinary Deans of Southern Africa

Evolving Veterinary Education for a Safer World
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Background

- In September, 2009, OIE organised a Regional Conference, in Arusha, Tanzania, for **Deans of Veterinary Faculties** and **Registrars of Veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSBs)** in Southern Africa on “**Veterinary Education in Southern Africa: matching demand and supply**”.
- Participants raised concerns over the state of the veterinary curriculum and the quality and governance of veterinary services in Southern Africa.

Background (cont'd)

- It was observed that **Veterinary Statutory bodies (VSBs) as well as Veterinary Schools in Southern Africa needed to work together** to address the dynamic needs and demands of the veterinary profession.
- The meeting came up with a set of recommendations to improve the quality and governance of veterinary services and **to improve and facilitate regulation and harmonization of the veterinary curriculum** in the OIE member countries of Southern Africa.

Veterinary Statutory Bodies Recommendations

1. That VSB's in the SADC region should **work towards improved coordination and communication** in the short term (1 year) sharing of information, and harmonization of their registration requirements and operational procedures in the mid term (3 years)
2. That a **working group be formed** to evaluate the registration requirements and operational procedures to reach consensus on the alignment, thereof, and in particular on the minimum standards of training

Veterinary Statutory Bodies Recommendations (*cont'd*)

3. That the VSB's of the region **establish a list of faculties** that are subjected to external audit from the region whose graduates qualify for **unconditional registration without writing a council exam** (where applicable), the criteria of which are accepted throughout the region;

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Considerations

1. The **importance** and **need for highly qualified veterinarians** and **veterinary paraprofessionals** in SADC, as well as the fact that the OIE considers the issue of initial and continuous veterinary education as part of its commitment to encouraging its Members to strengthen the activities of their National Veterinary Services;
2. The **emergence of new diseases**, the increase in new pathogens, the threat of transboundary animal diseases, the impact of environmental changes as well as the new societal demands in the field of food security, food safety, public health and animal welfare;

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Considerations (cont'd)

3. The need to **train** veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals to **meet these new expectations at a global, regional and national levels**;
4. The implementation of the new global concept “**One World-One Health**’ which brings together animal health, public health and environmental health;
5. The fact that **Africa cannot isolate itself from global trends** and must take into consideration global animal and human health issues;

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Considerations (cont'd)

6. The **need for veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals to be locally relevant** to professional requirements, societal needs, political expectations and environmental changes in the SADC region;
7. The **existence of both similarities and wide disparities** in veterinary training and veterinary training capacities between veterinary faculties in the region and from different parts of the world;

Veterinary education *Considerations (cont'd)*

8. The **fact that current regulatory systems** in SADC Member States **often hinder mobility** of veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals, and the need for mutual recognition of veterinary and veterinary paraprofessionals training within the region;
9. The need for **sharing human resources** and available **infrastructures** for initial and continuous education of veterinarians and paraprofessionals in the region, and the high cost of veterinary education;
10. The **existing willingness of veterinary faculties** in SADC to work with all interested parties including OIE and respective National Veterinary Services to develop innovative teaching and learning methods in veterinary education.

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Recommendations

1. That the **existing Deans meeting** (under the NUFU programme) be **maintained and expanded** to a **Veterinary Education Forum (VEF)** and to include other veterinary training institutes and countries in SADC through:
 - a) The development of an **electronic/ telematic** platform for e-networking
 - b) An **annual meeting of Deans** but also to include Representatives of other countries in SADC with a particular interest in veterinary education

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Recommendations (*cont'd*)

2. That **curricular reviews** currently being undertaken within the veterinary schools in SADC should, through consideration by the Veterinary Education Forum :
 - a) Identify **areas of potential harmonisation** within SADC.
 - b) Consider a **core-elective approach** with the development of Day-One competencies relevant to SADC.
 - c) Consider types of **elective programmes** required within SADC.
 - d) Consider **additional knowledge and skills**, such as in communication, leadership and interpersonal relationship required for veterinarians in SADC.

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Recommendations (*cont'd*)

- e) Consider **technological and pedagogic advances** to be applied in veterinary education delivery within SADC.
- f) Consider ways to **harmonise admission and assessment policies** applied within veterinary schools in SADC.
- g) Consider national, regional and global human and animal health issues that impact on the training of veterinarians within SADC.

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Recommendations (*cont'd*)

3. Collaboration and partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding (**MoUs**) **between the veterinary schools** should be developed and where possible “Twinning programmes” established within SADC as well as with partners in the developed countries to :
 - a) **Identify areas of collaboration** in undergraduate curricular development and harmonization.
 - b) Assist where possible in **undergraduate student training**.
 - c) Create opportunities for **academic and research staff exchange**.
 - d) Identify and develop opportunities for collaboration and partnerships in post graduate training and research.
 - e) **Identify and develop centers of special veterinary competence** within SADC for use in elective programmes.
 - f) Create **opportunities for veterinary specialist training**.

Veterinary education Recommendations (*cont'd*)

- g) **Collaborate** in the delivery of **continuing education programmes** in SADC.
- h) **Support** the development and responsibilities of the **OIE Collaborating Centre** for Training in Integrated Livestock and Wildlife Health and Management.
- i) Identify **additional areas** that should be developed and recognized as **OIE Collaborating Centers**.
- j) Considering ways in which collectively the SADC Region can **promote veterinary education as public good**.
- k) Consider ways in which veterinary schools can become more **involved in poverty alleviation** (income generation) through their undergraduate, post graduate, community engagement and research programmes.

Veterinary education Recommendations (*cont'd*)

4. The OIE should facilitate a workshop to consider the needs and requirements for veterinary paraprofessional training within SADC.
- We are requesting that these recommendations be adopted by this OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education (October 2009, Paris).
 - That the recommendations adopted by this OIE Global Conference be taken into account by SADC countries and Veterinary Faculties.

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Deans of Veterinary Faculties and
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Thank you for your attention