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REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE OIE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION FOR ANIMAL DISEASES

Paris, 12 June 2009

The meeting of the Bureau of the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases was held at the OIE headquarters in Paris, France, on 12 June 2009.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Gideon Brückner, President of the Commission.

The Agenda and the List of Participants are given at [Appendices I](#) and [II](#), respectively.

1. Welcome by the Director General

The newly elected President, Vice-President and Secretary General of the Commission were congratulated and welcomed by Dr Vallat, the Director General of the OIE. He reiterated the crucial role of the Scientific Commission in providing scientific advice to the OIE in general; to the Scientific and Technical Department and as a scientific backing and support to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission (Terrestrial Code Commission) for formulating OIE International Standards, as well as to the World Assembly of OIE Delegates for final decision on disease status recognition when this recognition is not covered by the fast track procedure managed directly by the Scientific Commission. Dr Vallat outlined the current strategic plan (2006–2010) and the new topics that are most likely to be included in the next strategic plan, subject to adoption by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates in 2010. He stressed the importance of the Specialist Commissions in advising the OIE within the framework of the strategic plan. He suggested a list of priority issues for the Commission: update the chapters on rabies, peste des petits ruminants, and bee diseases; establish standards on zoonotic haemorrhagic fevers (e.g. Crimean–Congo haemorrhagic fever); develop concepts for commodity-based trade (some diseases when details on risks for some products are still absent); consider setting up a procedure for the official recognition of disease status for selected horse diseases; oversee the production of a handbook on terrestrial animal health surveillance; and provide an opinion on the impact of ruminants on climate change. These issues will be prioritised based on the ongoing and future work of the OIE and taking into account the working programme of the previous Commission and the issues discussed during the 77th General Session of the OIE, including environmental and climate change concerns. He expressed the wish that the Commission would also be proactive in identifying potential new working areas of scientific importance to OIE.

2. Introductory remarks by the President of the Commission

The President of the Commission, Dr Gideon Brückner, outlined to the members their mandate within the Commission and clarified certain administrative matters regarding the work expected from the Commission, such as the duties of the Secretary General in drafting the report the suggested process for drafting the agenda of meetings and planning the meeting dates over the year. Clarification was provided of the procedural aspects of processing working documents and reports. The President proposed that the meeting dates for the full Commission meetings overlap with the other Specialist Commissions, in particular the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission, for discussion of common issues. Therefore, for 2009, the first meeting of the full Commission is scheduled for 8–11 September. For 2010 the meeting is scheduled for 2–5 March. These dates will be circulated to the other members of the Commission. The Commission agreed with the proposal that it would be more productive to conduct the planning process for each year at the February meeting of the Commission just prior to the General Session. This would allow for better and timelier planning of *ad hoc* Group meetings and other activities of the Commission. A meeting of the Bureau of the Commission in June each year would thus not be necessary.

The general management and attendance by members of the Commission of *ad hoc* Groups under the responsibility of the Commission were clarified and the suggestions will be shared with the other members of Commission for endorsement at the next meeting in September.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The Commission agreed on the proposed agenda and the agenda was adopted.

4. Review of the work plan and activities of the Scientific Commission

The Commission reviewed progress with the working plan for the period 2006–2009, based on the past reports of the Commission and the report of the President of the Commission to the World Assembly of OIE Delegates. It was noted that some activities were still ongoing; nevertheless the most important targets set for the period had been achieved. Ongoing activities were listed as follows:

- The finalisation of a Handbook on Terrestrial Animal Health Surveillance;
- Draft guidelines and consideration of the use of epidemiological models in animal health decisions;
- Issues on implementation of compartmentalisation, containment zone and protection zone with particular focus on foot and mouth disease (FMD);
- The sensitising of the OIE Specialist Commissions and relevant Working and *ad hoc* Groups on issues related to climate and environmental changes with regard to terrestrial and aquatic animal health and welfare;
- Surveillance for wildlife diseases;
- OIE Reference Laboratory networks (FMD and bluetongue);
- OIE/FAO Global Conference on Foot and Mouth Disease;
- Guidance to Members on FMD surveillance with regard to use of non-structural protein (NSP) tests and vaccine purity.

5. Draft working programme for the Scientific Commission: 2009–2012

The Commission Bureau had preliminary discussions on the ongoing and forthcoming work topics and compiled a preliminary list to be discussed in detail at the meeting of the Commission in September 2009. The topics identified for further consideration were:

- Review and update the existing chapter on rabies in support of new available scientific information. It was suggested that an expert from an OIE Reference Laboratory be invited to the September meeting of the Commission to provide further background information on the need for a review of the existing chapter of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*;
- Review and update the existing chapters on brucellosis. The approach of the chapters on brucellosis should be brought in line with the basic concept of the newly adopted chapter on bovine tuberculosis with respect to surveillance, compartments and the concept of herds free from disease;
- Review and update the existing chapter on peste des petits ruminants following the recent spread of the disease within Africa and Asia;
- Review and update the existing chapters on bee diseases;
- Develop a chapter on Crimean–Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) and consider expanding the concept to zoonotic haemorrhagic fevers in general;
- Consider a request to the Director General for the establishment of an *ad hoc* Group to discuss issues related to environmental and climate changes and livestock production – especially in relation to the perceived and real contribution of livestock production to global warming;

- Review the existing guidelines on surveillance for avian influenza and Newcastle disease, possibly by the *ad hoc* Group on Epidemiology with invited experts;
- Review the inactivation procedures for avian influenza and Newcastle disease virus in commodities. The OIE Scientific and Technical Department was requested to seek scientific background information from the relevant OIE Reference Laboratories prior to the next meeting;
- Revise the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) surveillance point model. The Scientific and Technical Department was requested to identify suitable experts to be considered for this task;
- Consider drafting specific guidelines for the implementation of compartmentalisation and containment zone concept for FMD and the implementation of the concept of a protection zone under different disease status scenarios;
- Consider developing a chapter for the *Terrestrial Code* on Enzootic haemorrhagic disease in deer following the request by OIE Members;
- Chapter on Classical swine fever: verify the surveillance provisions following the general discussions on the wildlife and domestic animal interface and relative trade considerations and concepts in the *Terrestrial Code*;
- Discuss a request for the OIE to consider the official recognition of disease status for equine diseases, either with a single or multiple disease approach.

Following the discussion of priorities, a work- and activity plan was compiled and recorded for internal use by the Commission and the Scientific and Technical Department.

6. Identification of priority issues for 2009–2010 (preliminary)

The Director General will be requested to convene *ad hoc* Groups to continue the activities of the following priority issues identified for 2009–2010:

- Review and update the existing chapter on rabies.
- Establish standards on zoonotic haemorrhagic fevers (Crimean–Congo haemorrhagic fever with the aim of extending the terms of reference of the Group to other zoonotic haemorrhagic fevers when appropriate).
- Review and update the existing chapters on brucellosis:
- Review and update the chapter on Peste des petits ruminants.
- Review and update chapters on bee diseases.
- Finalise the Handbook on Terrestrial Animal Health Surveillance.

7. Identification of specific topics for and interaction with other Commissions and Working Groups

It was acknowledged that several issues attended to by the Commission are linked to similar issues addressed by other Commissions and Working Groups. The Commission agreed that meetings should preferably be planned to allow for joint meetings with other Commissions, once or twice a year. A number of topics were identified that would benefit from an exchange among the different Commissions.

It was agreed that a representative of the Working Group on Wildlife Diseases and an expert from an OIE Reference Laboratory for rabies, would be invited for the September meeting. The President indicated that in view of the growing importance of the livestock–wildlife interface it would be important that a Member of the Commission attend the meeting of the Working Group on Wildlife Diseases.

7.1. OIE Reference Laboratory networks (FMD and bluetongue)

Following discussions on the interaction of the Commission with existing OIE Reference Laboratory networks, it was concluded that a Member of the Commission should attend the meetings of the reference laboratory networks for bluetongue and FMD.

7.2. FMD Surveillance in relation to nonstructural protein tests and vaccine purity

The report of the 2009 OIE FMD mission to South America contains recommendations for further attention by both the Scientific and Biological Standards Commissions. Issues on requirements in the OIE *Terrestrial Manual* on purity guidelines for FMD vaccines will be dealt with by the Biological Standards Commission while the Scientific Commission will further discuss issues related to FMD surveillance in relation to the application of NSP discriminatory tests and also taking into consideration the discussions and recommendations from the OIE/FAO Global Conference on FMD in Paraguay in June 2009.

7.3. General discussion on the use of “guidelines on” versus “chapter on” and implications

During the 77th General Session, OIE Members requested that consideration be given to re-introducing the word *guidelines* in the title of appropriate chapters or subsections of chapters in the restructured *Terrestrial Code*. Failure to do so might result in confusion on the status and application of guidelines in comparison to standards *per se*. This issue will be discussed in more detail by the Scientific Commission at the next meeting. The Director General will be invited to this discussion.

7.4. Consideration of infected wildlife for trade purposes, general concepts

The Commission concluded that it would be necessary to hold discussions with the Terrestrial Code Commission and also to consider inputs from the Working Group on Wildlife Diseases, before it could advise on the future approach of the OIE in standard setting as it relates to disease free status where the wildlife–livestock interface might have an effect on the disease status of a Member.

7.5 Various matters

- Discussions on the scientific justification for the exclusion of historical freedom for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) will be added to the agenda of future Commission meetings.
- *Chapter on swine vesicular disease*: the Terrestrial Code Commission would be requested to assess the parity of this chapter with the chapter on Classical swine fever. This issue will also be further clarified in discussions on the wildlife–livestock interface.

8. Review and reconsideration of composition of existing *ad hoc* Groups

In view of the need for the Scientific and Technical Department to plan the meetings of *ad hoc* Groups as soon as possible within the schedule of meetings of the OIE and to assure availability of experts, the Commission reviewed the existing list of *ad hoc* Groups under the responsibility of the Scientific Commission. A number of Groups were disbanded as their task had been accomplished (i.e. chapter adopted, specific question or solution addressed appropriately, etc.). The composition of future or new *ad hoc* Groups to be proposed to the Director General will be finalised following discussions and liaison between the Director General, the President of the Commission and the Head of the Scientific and Technical Department.

In support of the priority issues identified by the Commission, a list of *ad hoc* Groups in addition to the four existing *ad hoc* Groups on official disease status evaluation of Members (FMD, rinderpest, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and BSE) and the *ad hoc* Group on Epidemiology were proposed for consideration by the Director General. The agenda and calendar for dates of proposed meetings of *ad hoc* Groups will be circulated for endorsement at the meeting of the Commission in September.

9. Review of the *ad hoc* Group report and comments of the expert meeting

9.1. *Ad hoc* Group on Epidemiology, April 2009

The Commission took note of the discussions on the steps forward with the editing of the Handbook on Terrestrial Animal Health Surveillance and considered the approach chosen for this priority issue. It was decided to recommend to the Director General to convene a dedicated *ad hoc* Group if possible in August or early September, consisting of a core group of potential authors. It was suggested to consider incorporating the draft guidelines on the use of epidemiological models in animal health decisions within the terms of reference of the proposed *ad hoc* Group for the Handbook.

9.2. Expert meeting on Bluetongue, 14 April 2009

The Commission took note of the discussions held during the expert meeting on bluetongue during April 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to provide further scientific background to the Terrestrial Code Commission for presenting the revised *Terrestrial Code* chapter for adoption to the World Assembly of OIE Delegates. The Commission requested that the Scientific and Technical Department, in consultation with the International Trade Department, provide a summarised report of the meeting for documentation and for official adoption by the Scientific Commission.

10. Discussion on forthcoming scientific meetings and conferences: 2009–2010

The Commission encouraged exchange on forthcoming scientific conferences as several scientific discussions might be useful to the Commission in its task of advising on OIE policy and strategic planning. It was concluded that the Scientific and Technical Department should provide updates on such meetings and workshops during forthcoming meetings of the Commission.

The Scientific and Technical Department provided an overview of forthcoming OIE and other conferences already scheduled and on the regional training programmes for OIE national focal points. Members of the Commission further complemented the information on scientific meetings already scheduled on the international calendar. The Commission requested the Scientific and Technical Department to share relevant and appropriate information emanating from mission reports on conferences and workshops that were attended by OIE staff or by external experts on behalf of the OIE, within the working documents of future meetings of the Commission.

11. Draft agenda items for the meeting of Scientific Commission from 8 to 11 September 2009

To facilitate preparation of meetings, it was concluded that, as a standing operating procedure, the draft agenda for all meetings of the Commission should be proposed during the preceding meeting. The draft agenda should be finalised by the Head of the Scientific and Technical Department with the President of the Commission, and the agenda and working documents for each meeting should then be circulated at least 3 weeks prior to meetings to all members of the Commission.

12. Other issues

a) Letter exchange with a Member commenting on BSE risk status evaluation

The Bureau of the Commission took note of the comments of an OIE Member on BSE risk status evaluation that referred to the report of the *ad hoc* Group on BSE risk status evaluation of Members, which was endorsed by the Scientific Commission in February 2009.

b) Issues on zoning and official recognition of foot and mouth disease free status (Member request)

This item will be discussed in more detail during the September meeting of the Commission

13. Adoption of the draft report for the meeting

As this meeting of the Bureau of the Commission lasted only 1 day, the participants agreed that the draft report will be finalised by the President and circulated for comments. For future meetings of the Commission it was concluded that the Secretary General will provide a draft report for approval at the end of each meeting to expedite the availability of reports to OIE Members.

14. Next meeting of the Scientific Commission

The next meeting of the Commission at OIE Headquarters will be from 8 to 11 September 2009.

.../Appendices

**MEETING OF THE BUREAU
OF THE OIE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION FOR ANIMAL DISEASES
Paris, 12 June 009**

Agenda

1. Welcome by the Director General
 2. Introductory remarks by the President of the Commission
 3. Adoption of the agenda
 4. Review of the work plan and activities of the Scientific Commission
 5. Draft working programme for the Scientific Commission: 2009–2012
 6. Identification of priority issues for 2009–2010 (preliminary)
 7. Identification of specific topics for interaction with other Commissions and Working Groups
 8. Review and reconsideration of composition of existing *ad hoc* Groups
 9. Review of *ad hoc* Group report and comments of expert meeting
 - 9.1. *Ad hoc* Group on Epidemiology, April 2009
 - 9.2. Expert meeting on Bluetongue, 14 April 2009
 10. Discussion on forthcoming scientific meetings and conferences: 2009–2010
 11. Draft agenda items for the meeting of Scientific Commission from 8 to 11 September 2009
 12. Other issues
 13. Adoption of the draft report for the meeting
 14. Next meeting of the Scientific Commission
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**MEETING OF THE BUREAU
OF THE OIE SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION FOR ANIMAL DISEASES
Paris, 12 June 009**

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