



## Annual Report on the activities of the OIE in 2017

*Address by Dr Monique Eloit,  
OIE Director General*

After several years of improvement, world hunger is on the rise once again: the estimated number of people who are under-nourished went from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. The situation has particularly deteriorated in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and the south-east and west of Asia. Of course, climate change and conflict are the principal causes of this deterioration. But, in those same countries, animal diseases generate important productivity losses, and difficulties in accessing markets limits socio-economic development.

Moreover, zoonoses remain an important cause of human deaths, and WHO has categorised 7 zoonotic diseases as high priorities for its research programme.

Given that this is the case, you would be right to ask me:

- What is the OIE doing to control the spread of diseases that threaten the incomes of millions of families, particularly in poor countries where the majority of the population live in rural areas?
- What is the OIE doing to ensure that the 60,000 deaths (half of which are children) that occur every year as a result of being bitten by a rabid dog do not become an inevitability?
- And, more generally, how is the OIE contributing to ensuring that some of the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of the United Nations 2030 Agenda are achieved?

I would reply that the OIE is an organisation that does not shy away from real-world problems: it places its mandate at the very heart of global challenges; it is committed – not to taking action directly or acting in your place – but to equipping you to respond to everyday emergencies and prepare for the future.

With this aim in mind, our work to improve animal health governance is based on the three key areas of work that have been reaffirmed in the current strategic plan, namely, setting standards, ensuring transparency in animal health information, and supporting the development of policies to strengthen the capacity of national Veterinary Services.

In short, we are reinforcing the identity of the OIE, using a renewed communication strategy that is modern and dynamic.

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Ladies and Gentlemen

We are already half way through the implementation of the 6th Strategic Plan.

The 2017 activity report, which I have the honour to present to you this morning, provides us with the opportunity to step back and look at the progress we have made since January 2016, and to measure the initial impact it has had on the efficacy, credibility and visibility of the OIE.

Like last year, you have been given a very detailed report (86 SG/1) but also a summary table, which provides a quicker and easier way to see the progress that has been made in the implementation of the strategic plan. In order to make it easier to track what has been achieved and evaluate the ability of OIE teams to carry out the work programme, you will see that this summary provides a reminder of what was achieved in 2016. It gives a clearer picture of how work is progressing, both in terms of defining policies and carrying them out.

This year, rather than being a purely formal exercise of presenting a rundown of our activities, I would like the presentation of the Director General's activity report to give you a better idea of the policy framework in which we are carrying out these activities. It is important to me that the work of the OIE is not seen as a collection of unrelated activities, on the contrary, there is a coherence to the programmes that have been built around the 3 objectives of the strategic plan, and it is my wish to make this clear and to demonstrate the value of their interdependency.

So, in the course of my speech, I will try to show you how we are creating this cohesiveness, and how we are ensuring that, in every area of our work, we are making the improvements you asked for regarding the 3 cross-cutting areas of the strategic plan – scientific excellence, engagement and transparency, and the internal governance of the Organisation.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that this approach, which has required a change to the way we work, has had the advantage of encouraging the emergence of a new internal culture at the OIE, which is shared by all personnel, be they here in Paris or in the Representations. This is a powerful motivating factor which is also reflected in a strong commitment among all our staff members, who are proud of the values that we are transmitting. This commitment can be clearly seen in the amount of work that has been carried out over the last year.

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Ladies and Gentlemen

As I mentioned previously, the three priority objectives identified in the 6th Strategic Plan are the three guiding principles of everything we do.

**→ What were the main achievements in terms of the first objective of the Strategic Plan: Securing animal health and welfare by appropriate risk management**

First of all, the 4 Specialist Commissions and the ad hoc groups that report to them have, of course, continued to operate smoothly, and the Presidents of these Commissions will present the results of their work. I think they will also be able to provide an update on the substantial progress that has been made as a result of the changes to the way in which the Commissions and the Secretariats coordinate their work, and they will update you on the increased transparency in the work schedule and the terms of reference of the ad hoc groups.

But as you yourselves are persuaded of, the development of standards could be improved by collecting information on the way in which they are implemented. This is the aim of the project to create an Observatory, which will be presented to you at the beginning of tomorrow morning's panel meeting with several international partner organisations, including the WTO and the OECD. I would like to emphasise here that the information that will be collected through this Observatory will be used in two ways.

- Firstly, it will be used to revise or clarify standards (*this corresponds to the 1st objective of the strategic plan*).

- Secondly, it will be used to adapt our Focal Point training workshops and some of the critical competencies of the PVS Tool (*in accordance with the aims of the 3rd objective of the strategic plan*). I know that this is important to you, and Dr Sarah Kahn will certainly return to this point during her presentation of the technical item. In your answers to the questionnaire, you emphasised the fact that, for developing countries, the PVS Pathway provides technical support, but also advocates for the strengthening of standards implementation capacities. For me, it is the perfect demonstration of the interdependence of the OIE's strategic objectives that I referred to in my introduction.

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As far as control programmes for priority animal diseases are concerned, we are still highly invested in the implementation of global strategies, and consolidating partnerships is a key component of this dynamics.

- The global action plan for rabies control was finalised in partnership with WHO, FAO and Global Alliance for Rabies Control, and was then launched in September 2017. In

addition, new communication products were introduced on World Rabies Day, so we are ready to launch the business plan.

- For foot and mouth disease, the PCP tool was revised and a four-year work strategy and two-year budgeted action plan were developed in collaboration with FAO and EuFMD.
- In addition, the decision was taken to strengthen collaboration with EuFMD in order to develop training on FMD.
- The PPR control and eradication programme, and the resource-mobilisation strategy, were finalised with FAO. In 2017, the first round of meetings on PPR regional roadmaps ended and, at the same time, a second round was launched, with meetings organised for four regions. A high-level conference will be held on 7 September to encourage investment in the programme and to support the momentum generated among the countries concerned.
- Finally, for rinderpest, the work of the Joint Advisory Committee is ongoing; most notably, it is preparing an operational framework for the management and deployment of vaccine reserves in the case of a re-emergence of the disease. A simulation exercise was organised in Kenya in November 2017, and a second was organised more recently in Sri Lanka. The President of the Scientific Commission will give you more information about this. And, of course, the communication campaigns designed to ensure that everyone remains vigilant are continuing; this year saw the launch of a serious game, and you are all invited to participate by downloading the application on your smartphone. The instructions on how to do this are on this slide and in the leaflet that you have been given.

All this work shows, once again, the interdependency of the strategic objectives of our mandate: 1) the importance of ensuring that the corresponding chapters in the Code and/or the Manual are up to date (*the rabies chapter is being updated currently and the rinderpest chapter may be updated soon to take account of the eradication situation*), 2) the importance of having precise animal health information on the epidemiological evolution of diseases so that control programmes can be adapted accordingly, but also 3) the importance of the support afforded to the Member Countries concerned. This is done by:

- Providing high-quality vaccines.
- Organising regional workshops, because an understanding of global action plans makes the development of national plans easier.
- Providing Delegates with a tutorial to guide them through the preparation of an application dossier for status recognition.
- Adapting PVS missions, as was done for PPR in Turkey and Afghanistan.
- But also, by developing guidelines on training for veterinary paraprofessionals, which is what we undertook to do at the global conference on veterinary education in Bangkok in 2016. The ad hoc Group that we formed has just finalised the first section of these guidelines, on paraprofessionals working in animal health. The documents have been given to you and will be available on our website. In the coming months these will be followed by guidelines for paraprofessionals working in diagnostic laboratories and then by guidelines for those contributing to areas of public health, such as the inspection of meat and other animal products.

- Finally, I would like to mention the work carried out by a young Tunisian veterinarian who undertook a 6-month internship with the Communication Unit. He reviewed all the technical cards on OIE-listed diseases and created a new webpage that makes it easier to connect to the corresponding chapter in the Code and to other information on the disease. I hope that you will now be able to take full advantage of this mine of information, which can be accessed through the new portal that we have just opened on our website.

To ensure that there is a solid and transparent basis for these activities, over the last few months a great deal of work has been done to improve the internal governance of the Organisation:

1. A think tank on OIE vaccine banks met in November 2017, in collaboration with GALVmed, to determine rules for how these banks should be managed: a strategy note will be published by the end of 2018.
2. All the procedures for evaluating status dossiers were revised, improved and then made public.
3. In addition, a methodology was developed to analyse the conclusions of PVS mission reports, in order to provide information that can be used to help assess applications for status recognition.
4. Finally, the procedure for self-declarations has also been revised and from now on these declarations will be published on the OIE website immediately.

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The fight against rabies, FMD and PPR fundamentally rests on mass vaccination campaigns. But for a number of other diseases, the use of drugs is what is most crucial, whether that be antibiotics or antiparasitic medicines. This is why a commitment to the prudent and controlled use of these veterinary medicines is so important.

Again, for this issue, which you will have the opportunity to discuss with the President of the Code Commission on Wednesday, the OIE goes beyond simply updating standards. The OIE encourages and supports countries to translate the global strategy into national action plans:

- A manual has been written jointly with the WHO and FAO to help them in this matter.
- WHO, FAO and the OIE have worked in close collaboration to develop the Global Framework for Development & Stewardship to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance and determine how it should be implemented. This framework will act as an umbrella, bringing together different tools and instruments that will be developed over time using a One Health approach. The framework encompasses the whole chain, from R&D to appropriate use by the end user. The aim is to finalise this work in 2019.
- A PVS mission that has a particular focus on targeting AMR was prepared (Uganda – end of 2018) and we will consider how these missions can be expanded.

- Several very educational communication tools have been distributed so that everyone can use them in accordance with local needs.

The global conference that is being organised at the moment, which will be held in Marrakech next October with the support from the authorities in the Kingdom of Morocco, will be the occasion to take stock of how far work in this area has advanced. The analysis of information from the database on the use of antimicrobial agents, on which a second report was published in December 2017, and the decisions that you take this week concerning definitions in the Code, will also help us determine the future direction of our work in this area.

More than any other issue, the problem of AMR requires careful coordination between the actors involved: international organisations (most importantly WHO and FAO, our partners in the Tripartite alliance), national authorities, private actors, including the pharmaceutical industry and professional organisations, and civil society. It is in this spirit of collaboration that the OIE is now working with a great deal of determination in the United Nations intersectoral group, including the Secretariat hosted by WHO. The second physical meeting of the group was held at the OIE in October 2017 (and the discussions were broadcast on YouTube). Today, ladies and gentlemen, I am not only asking you to take note of what the OIE has done, I am calling on you to act. Take action by talking to Ministers about the importance of getting involved and taking an active part in the discussion. Progress cannot be made without a balanced consideration of the challenges for the veterinary sector. **The OIE cannot leave it to others to decide what must be done in regard to veterinary therapeutics.** The work is technical but the challenges are political. The OIE must, therefore, be present, whether that be within UN bodies, or in political forums such as the G7 and G20. The Tripartite alliance developed with WHO and FAO must be legally strengthened, and the political authorities of the Member Countries of the three organisations must reaffirm that WHO, FAO and the OIE are all crucial to this work and must all continue to be involved.

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The fight against disease requires structured action plans and tools (vaccines, medicines, diagnostic methods, etc.). There is a need for strong upstream support in terms of scientific expertise and research. In this area too, the OIE plays a part:

First and foremost, the OIE is pursuing its policy of scientific excellence. It does this by implementing the procedure for evaluating candidates for election to the Specialist Commissions, which you adopted at the last General Session, but also by continuing the work of the Biological Standards Commission on the qualifications of OIE Reference Centres: its President, Dr Beverly Schmitt, will give you more details about this tomorrow.

The other way in which the OIE is involved is through its leadership role in scientific projects:

- Let me remind you that since November 2016, the OIE has hosted the scientific secretariat of the International Research Consortium on Animal Health (STAR-IDAZ), which is a global initiative designed to coordinate research programmes and contribute to the development of new animal health strategies. Thanks to the secretariat, the OIE

has been able to carry out an analysis and has selected 6 issues that must be considered priorities.

- The project to create a platform for the collection and management of genomic sequences (which is what you asked for by adopting Resolution 33 in May 2015) has seen significant progress, with the help of the scientific expertise of the Centre for Virus Research at the University of Glasgow (United Kingdom) and the Animal Health Institute (IZSLER) in Brescia (Italy).
- Similarly, the virtual biobank project is also making good progress; as you may remember, this project is about developing an online catalogue of the biological resources produced and distributed by the network of OIE Reference Centres; this information will be particularly useful for countries that don't have enough diagnostic capacity. At this point, I would like to thank the Collaborating Centre in Brescia (Italy) for helping to develop this database and for hosting the biobank.
- Finally, I would like to mention that research into certain equine diseases is still ongoing, after being initiated in collaboration with the International Horse Sports Confederation, which is also on our agenda.

There is another subject that deserves our attention - the work undertaken for the preparation and validation of a new international standard for bovine tuberculin, as bovine tuberculosis is still an important zoonosis in many countries. Several OIE Member Countries have offered their expertise and facilities of their laboratories to carry out some of the validation studies required, and we would like to thank them for that. At a meeting in June 2017, the ad hoc Group developed an action plan and a timetable, with the aim of proposing a new standard to the Assembly for adoption in May 2020. The partnership with WHO, FAO and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease is now well established.

The OIE considers itself to be primarily a scientific and technical organisation. Given the development of all these activities, the recommendations of the Biological Standards Commission and our involvement in numerous projects, we must now aggregate all these elements into a strategy that enables you (our Member Countries) and our network of Reference Centres and other partners to understand the framework in which the OIE's scientific work is carried out and to see how it aligns with the objectives of our mandate. I hope to present a first draft to the Council in the coming months.

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The deliberate use of pathogens for malicious purposes is still a cause for concern. After the 1st OIE Conference on Biological Threat Reduction that the OIE organised in June 2015, we continued to work on this issue, with a fruitful partnership with several organisations and actors in this sector. I will not go into detail, because later on Dr Tianna Brandt will present the conclusions of the 2nd conference organised in Ottawa (Canada) last November and the new avenues of work that were established subsequently, which include work on the theme of 'biological risk reduction and legislation'.

I would like to take the opportunity this morning to remind you of some of the complementary activities that have taken place (which can be connected to the other pillars of the strategic plan), namely:

- The launch of the second round of training for Focal Points for Veterinary Laboratories, which began in Europe;
- The organisation of two PVS missions focusing on the activities of laboratories (the first in Costa Rica in March and the second in Kyrgyzstan in June);
- And together with FAO, our participation in the whole-genome sequencing of rinderpest isolates before their destruction.

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Finally, given that in May last year you adopted the OIE Global Animal Welfare Strategy, I don't want to finish this second part of my activity report without referring to the work carried out in this area.

You will remember that last year, you accepted my proposal to disband the working group that had covered this subject for many years. Animal welfare is now covered by the ordinary standard-setting procedures of the Organisation. The ad hoc groups have continued their work, and proposals are regularly put before the members of the Code Commission.

In accordance with the commitments we made, we have created a Forum for dialogue with stakeholders in the 5 OIE regions. The first meeting was held in March 2018 and I believe that the forty-or-so participants were happy with this new approach. For my part, I am convinced that the discussions that take place within this forum will be very useful for facilitating the continuing development of the Organisation's work programme.

**➔ 2<sup>nd</sup> area of work linked to the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective of the Strategic Plan: Establishing trust through transparency and communication**

I would like to begin this second part of my presentation by briefly mentioning the work of our communication team. The illustrations that accompanied my presentation this morning and the videos and posters that are being presented over the course of this week provide a clear overview of the work they have done. The restructuring of the OIE Bulletin, notably the publication of a monthly Newsletter, also deserves to be mentioned.

At this point, as we are talking about our objective of transparency and communication, I imagine that your thoughts are turning to the WAHIS notification system.

Indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- To design disease control strategies in accordance with the standards of the Code and with good veterinary practice;
- To help Members of the Specialist Commissions to establish work programmes that are in line with your priorities;
- To assess the status of countries in terms of certain diseases, and to follow the changes in their status;
- To contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of Veterinary Services in ways which meet their needs;

We need reliable and validated epidemiological data that are available to everyone.

But it's important to say that the OIE's role is not only to collect, sort and check the information received. We must also produce elaborate information; we must distribute it to all potentially interested parties and encourage them to use it to good effect. And so that the information makes an effective contribution to animal health activities, it must, of course, meet needs, but it must also be accessible in suitable formats and available without delay.

But I will let Dr Paula Cáceres present the work of her department in detail. Nevertheless, this morning, I must highlight the challenge of modernising our WAHIS system. The immediate objective is to improve the IT tool but above all, the investment gives us the opportunity to improve the quality of the service provided. We want the OIE to be able to:

- Carry out retrospective analyses to help anticipate events.
- Follow up on weak signals in order to identify the danger and evaluate the risk.
- Integrate more non-veterinary information, particularly information on socio-economics and the climate, so that we can understand events in the light of other factors that may have an impact on changes in animal health or favour disease emergence.
- Ensure that the OIE system can interconnect with other systems to allow networking and information sharing.

It is an ambitious project that we are also conducting using an approach based on partnerships, including partnerships with academic institutions. I will mention at this point the project that is currently being developed with the University of Liverpool in light of Resolution 35, which was adopted in May 2016 and in which you asked the OIE to do more in the area of animal health economics.

The WAHIS modernisation project, which we call *WAHIS+*, has begun well: the launch phase of the project ended successfully in November 2017. We have put in place robust governance and established a ten-year budget. We are respecting the timescale we've set and phase 2 has already begun with the selection of the IT company that will manage the project, which began work a few weeks ago.

I would like to thank all of you that have already given your support. It is an important project for the OIE, which we could not finance from the Organisation's regular budget alone. I hope that we can count on your continued support.

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Before I conclude this second section of my presentation, I would like to mention a related project, one which I introduced to you last year during the presentation of the provisional activity programme for 2017, namely the preparation of an IT systems master plan. As intended, it was finalised and presented to the Council at their September meeting. We are planning to update our office and IT equipment, and as security is the number one priority, work to update the security of our IT systems will be carried out the same time as the WAHIS+ project, which needs appropriate and secure IT infrastructure. This requires a sizeable investment, and the Director of Finance will give you more information during his budget presentation on Thursday afternoon.

**→ 3rd area of work linked to the 3rd objective of the Strategic Plan: Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Veterinary Services**

The OIE's mandate was built around the two missions that we have just been considering: the development of standards and the dissemination of animal health information. In 1995, the WHO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the 'SPS Agreement') gave greater international legitimacy to the OIE by recognising its unique role as a reference organisation.

In our collective memory, we must also remember another date: that of the ministerial conference organised by the WTO in Doha (Qatar) in November 2001, during which the Director Generals of the OIE, FAO, WHO, WTO and the World Bank made a joint declaration. These 5 Director Generals made a commitment to (and I quote): '*strengthen the capacity of developing countries to participate effectively in the development and application of international standards*'.

For the OIE, this declaration has had several consequences, but I will mention just two:

- First of all, this declaration gave support to the OIE's message about the importance of investing in Veterinary Services, whose action should be recognised as a Global Public Good. It is a message that the OIE never tires of repeating, and little by little, after years of indifference, the importance of having functional and well-organised veterinary and public health structures became a subject of renewed interest (*and I think that we can pay tribute to Dr Vallat for his commitment in this regard*).
- Secondly, this declaration can be considered as the starting point, you could say the 'birth certificate', of what was to become the PVS Pathway.

In the years that followed, the OIE – your Assembly – adopted standards on the quality and evaluation of Veterinary Services. Moreover, a methodology and tools were developed, then improved, then finalised; experts were trained; and Member Countries gradually began to sign

up to the PVS Pathway by requesting missions. More recently, the WHO has drawn inspiration from this model to develop its own evaluation tools to assess the implementation of the International Health Regulations.

So, yes, while we were celebrating 10 years of the PVS Pathway, it was vital to pause for a moment to evaluate the numerous successes it had achieved, but also the weaknesses that had been identified, and consider the improvements you would like to see to ensure that the PVS Pathway remains relevant, given the new animal health challenges. At the last General Session, I was not in a position to provide details of the conclusions of the think tank forum that had taken place shortly beforehand (3–5 April 2017). I can now make up for that this year.

Of course, some of the current features of the PVS Pathway that have been identified as crucial to its success will be maintained, no matter how the Pathway evolves in the future: let me say that it is an independent and external process that is country-driven and uses methods and tools which have a firm basis in OIE standards. And it will continue to take a broad-based systems approach. But today, we would like an approach that is more flexible and specifically tailored to each situation so that countries have a greater sense of ownership of the PVS Pathway. So, there will be a variety of options, including options for self-evaluation, more specific content (for example, to support strategies for antibiotic resistance or PPR control) and greater connectivity with similar programmes, most notably with the WHO evaluations of the implementation of the International Health Regulations.

The PVS Pathway is not just a matter of carrying out missions at the request of Member Countries. We must also put more investment into the cross-cutting elements of the pathway, such as the continuous improvement of the tools and methodology and the training of experts. To do this, we need suitable financial resources and a dedicated (and well identified) team at OIE Headquarters.

Ultimately, the PVS Pathway must reflect a larger vision: this programme should extend beyond its strictly technical and veterinary focus and link up with global programmes (notably, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals) and take part in strategic partnerships at both global and regional level.

Since April 2017, the OIE has been working hard to implement the results of the think tank: a schedule has been prepared, relationships between the different categories of stakeholders have been identified, as have different stages in the implementation of the PVS Pathway and the underlying concepts, and a business case - including a financial plan - has been drawn up. Today, I am proud to be the spokesperson for my colleagues and to officially announce the launch of the PVS Pathway Evolution.

I would invite you to read or re-read the special issue of the Bulletin which came out at the beginning of the year. It will give you details about the conclusions of the think tank and the action that has been taken since. And this week, I would encourage you to visit the stand that will be in the business centre throughout the week. In addition to the general information that you will receive, you can meet experts who can give you more detailed information on particular aspects of the Pathway.

- Monday – the PVS Laboratory Tool
- Tuesday – the links between the OIE PVS Pathway and the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR)
- Wednesday – the OIE Veterinary Legislation Support Programme
- Thursday – the PVS evaluation of aquatic animal health services

I hope that many of you will visit this stand. It is an important topic for the future, for both you and the OIE. We had a programme, today we have a strategy. I hope that I can count on your support so that this strategy will be a success.

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Distinguished Delegates,

As I said in my introduction, we are halfway through the implementation of the 6th Strategic Plan, and I am confident that, when it comes time to take stock of our progress, we will have met our commitments. Nevertheless, some activities and programmes will need to be strengthened in order to ensure that they can be maintained. It is for this reason, as we must already start thinking about preparing the 7th strategic plan, that I will be making proposals to the soon-to-be elected Council Members so that work for the 7th strategic plan will also include a section on the budget. I want the OIE to engage in an “objectives vs means” approach so that when you – the Delegates – are asked to adopt this next strategic plan, you have a full picture of the Organisation’s future projects.

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## **CONCLUSION**

Mr President, Members of the Council, Distinguished Delegates, in accordance with our commitments, we have continued to implement each objective of the strategic plan. I believe that we have achieved greater coherence in our work and that – ultimately - the credibility of the OIE has been strengthened.

It is my hope that your approval of this activity report will be an expression of your thanks to all those who have made a significant contribution to making it such a positive report: the members of the Specialist Commissions and ad hoc groups, experts from the network of Reference Centres, the countries that host our Regional and Sub-Regional Representations, the Member Countries that host conferences and workshops and those that allocate funds to allow us to develop an ambitious programme of activities, and finally, our donors and partners, whose collaboration greatly increases the impact of our actions.

For my part, I would also like to thank the staff of the OIE. This activity report is theirs. Without their professionalism, none of this would be possible.

Thank you.