

CHALLENGES OF REFORMING NATIONAL VETERINARY LEGISLATION;

Vincent R. Rubarema

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries – Republic of Uganda

Uganda proclaimed the first veterinary legislation in 1918 (The Animal Disease Act 1918). Since then there have been reforms of the Legislation dictated by the prevailing socio-economic, cultural, political, and technological environment. The impacts of these drivers vary from country to country hence accounting for observable variations in country legislations. Globalization and consumer protection are inevitably converging us to harmonized methods of guaranteeing quality and safety of traded items. The task of harmonizing veterinary legislation is challenging and some of the challenges include:

The drivers of legislative reform differ between developed and developing countries. Whereas internal consumer demands drive the reforms in developed countries, external markets (consumer demands) are the driving forces in developing countries. In both cases the benefits are analyzed from different perspectives.

The costs of implementing international legislation are significant for developing countries. Due to underdeveloped infrastructure and technical systems, legislative reform tends to play a “catch up” game. This translates into compensatory or accelerated investments to meet the demands of new laws. In many countries the consequence is that this has a heavy demand on national budgets and it warrants protracted slow implementation with consequent loss of interest in the legislation because of insignificant returns, (especially in the transitional period).

In the context of the fast evolving technologies and consumer interests, the ideal legislation is a live instrument subject to continuous review. Countries must ensure sustainability of the review processes to ensure that targets are within reach and useful.

The scope of veterinary legislation reflects significant bearing on related disciplines. The areas of intersection with other disciplines are many and harmonization of veterinary legislation with other legislation is a demanding process.

Uganda has faced these challenges, and is ready to work with the international community to realize a better national veterinary legislative environment. We appreciate that many countries have experienced the process and have many useful answers to the challenges we are confronted with.

As part of the process Uganda requested the OIE to carry out an evaluation of the veterinary services using the PSV tool. This exercise took place in 2007. We have gone further to request for evaluation of

the national veterinary legislation. This was accomplished in August 2010. Uganda is due to sign an MOU with OIE seeking support for improving the national veterinary legislation. We thank the OIE for the support so far extended to Uganda.

Keywords: Veterinary Legislation – Globalization – Consumer protection – OIE support.
