Dr SEIMENIS welcome the participants and opened the floor for open discussions and brainstorming.

Dr MESLIN explained that this meeting has been recommended by the last MZCP-JCC-Meeting and aimed to improve and strengthen the work of MZCP in the Mediterranean and Middle East Regions (MMRs).

Dr HALLAJ expressed the importance of the Programme and the necessity to clear and define the real duties of it. He mentioned the new phase, facing public health in the area, especially with the new distribution of emerging diseases, where most of them are of zoonotic origin. The other problem is that those diseases are affecting the economy of the member countries, referring to the new spread of Avian Flu in the region. Another problem is the risk of these diseases to human health.

Finally, he stressed the importance of special programmes on zoonoses in the region and new duties (more strong and effective) for the MZCC and that it is now the time for a cooperative work among different international organizations.

Dr C. EDDI expressed the full cooperation and support of FAO to the MZCP, and he mentioned the need for more concrete suggestions and detailed programmes.

In reference to the introductory note, in the file, he suggested that a new category should be used for the classification of countries targeted from the Programme. FAO is not establishing “Collaborating” Centres any more, but “reference” ones. May be it could be managed that the MZCC becomes a FAO “reference” centre. However, not under the present circumstances and MZCP Statute.

He stressed the ability of FAO to establish “reference” Centers, with the necessary support, for the running of programmes related to common interest.

Formal relationship should be established in order to involve MZCP in such collaboration.

Dr N. CHARISIS explained the concept of the MZCP and the different activities progressing in the area. Dr Z. HALLAJ mentioned how planning is essential for the future perspectives of the Programme. The last comment by Dr C. EDDI was that the request for support should be coming from the member countries and not from the Center itself.

Dr G. YEHIA explained the GF-TADs programme to be performed, in cooperation with FAO-OIE and other related organizations and donors. This collaboration requests the contribution of regional WHO Entities such as EMRO and MZCC.

The cooperation should be extended to cover different donors especially organizations from the private sector, examples were mentioned such as this of the Training Course in Egypt, Nov. 2005. The IOs should cosponsor the MZCP for the particular region and for particular activities.
Dr N. CHARISIS explained the activities offered from the Center and the importance of collaboration with other organizations.

Dr Z. HALLAJ explained the need to strengthen first the basic capacity and capabilities of the Center and establish a clear frame of the Center before presenting activities.

A conclusion from Dr Z. HALLAJ was that zoonoses will never be covered without the collaboration of the three International Organizations (WHO, FAO, OIE). It is important, he said, stabilizing the work of the MZCP beyond any temporary activities. Let’s all the IOs cosponsoring the MZCP in joint activities in the filed of zoonoses in this particular part of the world.

Dr Ben-Ismail mentioned the weaknesses of the zoonoses programme in EMRO and referred to the inter-American meeting at ministerial level on health and Agriculture (RIMSA) as a good example -to be followed -of a Forum for Collaboration and Coordination on issues related to VPH, with participation of the Minister of Health and Agriculture from PAHO member states.

The main regional problem is the ignorance of zoonoses in the member countries.

Dr C. EDDI explained how far the priorities are in the GF-TADs from the main interest of the MZCC activities (transboundary diseases like FMD, BSE, AI, TSF, RVF).

Dr G. YEHIA reminded on the recommendation to mandate MZCC to work with the three related IOs.

Dr Z. HALLAJ suggested for a “Memorandum of Understanding” to be signed between OIE and the MZCP, as a beginning and then, proceed with FAO. Dr G. YEHIA agreed with the above mentioned proposal.

Dr F.-X. MESLIN explained the current situation at WHO/HQ and the future perspectives of MZCC inside this situation.

Dr D. TABBAA stressed the need for maintaining the profile of the MZCC and improves it with the collaboration of the other IOs by accepting and dividing the duties of capacity building, implementing programmes and providing strategic prevention and control plans for zoonoses.

Dr Z. HALLAJ stressed again the need for the cosponsoring of the three IOs at the regional level and to sign in an agreement among these IOs.

Dr G. YEHIA presented the collaboration with other regional Organizations like AOAD with which OIE is going to sign an agreement for collaboration in Beirut next April. The MZCC is recognized at the regional level and there is a need to have the same procedure as with AOAD, with other organizations. Identifying and nominating experts from the MMERegions would facilitate the MZCP task.

Dr D. NITZAN, WR, Serbia-Montenegro representing EURO, described her work at WHO, mentioning the stability packed programme in Balkan countries supported from the European Union and other organizations, having divided their activities to different countries and they represent in this programme the public health and food safety issues.

Their activities are mostly capacity building, legislation, etc.

Dr Z. HALLAJ summarized the willingness of EMRO to ask member countries to become members of MZCP and encouraging European countries to also become members of MZCP, in order to activate and improve the activities and duties of the WHO/MZCC.

Three aspects of the development of the Center were suggested from Dr Z. HALLAJ, the first is to keep the Center as it is and just support it. The second to rebuild a Joint WHO/FAO/OIE Center with the cosponsoring of the three Organizations and the 3rd concept to go through the Statute and revise it according to the needs. Dr C. EDDI could investigate if, in the FAO context, the option for a tripartite Center could be feasible.
Dr G. YEHIA asked to discuss the suggestions in details step by step.

Dr D. NITZAN was worried about the name of the Center because Mediterranean is limiting the contribution of European and Asian countries which do not belong to this region.

Dr Z. HALLAJ explained that this is not a geographical description and it's clear that any country could become member.

Dr G. YEHIA stressed that we should invite more countries to join the MZCP, which will also strengthen and support the role of the Centre.

Dr D. TABBA referred on the history of the MZCC where the concept was to deal with zoonoses in a special area, and cooperate between both human and animal health sectors. The development of the Center has shown the necessity to extend and reorganize the infrastructure of the Center, by strengthening it and making it able to be effectively involved in solving problems related to zoonoses in this part of the world where there is no similar Center working with the same subjects and sectors.

Dr C. EDDI asked to start with this idea by looking for resources to support the Center.

Dr Z. HALLAJ expressed again the importance to have a clear vision for the future of the Center. The new structure of the Center and the role of the different WHO parties (HQ, EMRO, EURO) and how could an ad-hoc FAO/OIE joint Center be settled in this meeting.

The discussions were then concentrated on the ways to develop the Center, many suggestions were covering the initial aspect inside WHO, starting from the restructuring and strengthening the MZCC-Office capacities and then the support and strengthening of the VPH unit at HQ and the related programmes in EMRO and EURO.

Then a special support for the Center was discussed with the contribution of OIE and FAO. Dr G. YEHIA explained the steps his organization is following to make a better regional collaboration between different IOs and other donor organizations.

A special interest was mentioned from Dr. G. YEHIA in the electronic surveillance network at the regional level for the prevention and control of zoonoses.

**29.03.2006 Afternoon Session**

Dr C. EDDI presented the possibilities from FAO to support MZCP, mentioning that one possibility could be to support the MZCP with funds from the FAO Regular Programme, for example, to implement a Regional Electronic Network on Brucellosis at a cost of no more than US$ 10,000 annually and implementing an electronic conference in regular basis. Another possibility could be through the Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) from FAO. He also mentioned that there is a good possibility to implement regional TCP addressing zoonotic diseases (e.g. Echinococciosis) affecting the region and considered as priority. However, this should be requested by the Member Countries. Such requests should be first addressed to the local FAO representatives and then to FAO, Rome. The MZCP could be the implementing agency supporting TCs from the technical side. FAO, could be developing these initiatives in a joint action with WHO and OIE. Another possibility could be supporting the MZCP with the participation of some delegates on the cost of FAO when needed.

Dr Z. HALLAJ asked about the support of the Greek Government, Dr A. SEIMENIS explained the request by the MZCC of a physician and of a secretary from the Ministry of Health in Greece. He suggested that a joint visit of Director Generals WHO, FAO and OIE to be agreed for their visit to the Ministers of Health, Agriculture and Foreign Affairs of Greece to further strengthening the support of the Greek Government to the MZCC.

**Thursday 30.3.2006 Morning Session**

Dr D. TABBA referred the conclusions of the first day of the Workshop and Dr Z. HALLAJ asked to start discussing the plan of action of the next two years to see how they could support and strengthen it.
The strengthening of the Programme should rely not only on capacity building and human resources development, but another two points should be added, the first is to build a regional comprehensive project to monitor zoonoses and get actual and real information about major zoonoses, the second point is to work on guidelines and strategies for the control and elimination of zoonotic and foodborne diseases.

Dr N. CHARISIS described the prospects on which the MZCC is suggesting to strengthen the Programme. Three points were added to the major programmes agreed on the last MZCP/JCC, the first is the electronic surveillance system, the second is the training on laboratory diagnosis on different zoonoses and the third is on Food Safety and public health education.

The regional electronic surveillance system was discussed and Dr Z. HALLAJ was concerned not to double the work of the current surveillance system available in the member countries. The discussion was describing a regional sentinel intersectoral surveillance Network which could provide information for EMRO/EURO/FAO/OIE regional offices so as to build effective and applicable strategies for the control of these diseases.

The idea was to prepare a draft on a regional intersectoral surveillance project on major zoonotic diseases, send it to the relevant Organizations and approve it in a technical Workshop involving member countries.

Dr Z. HALLAJ stressed the need for providing a list of experts and institutions working in different zoonotic issues so as to rely on them for some special regional missions.

The second item discussed was the TCs in laboratory diagnosis for major zoonotic diseases. Dr. Z. HALLAJ would like to have it as a part of the surveillance system.

The third issue discussed was the training courses on public and environmental health.

Dr D. NITZAN expressed the need for such training courses in the Balkan area directed to professionals in public and animal health. TCs for teachers should be run under the current regional programmes in the same subjects.

Dr A. SEIMENIS opened the discussion about the International Workshop on intersectoral and interprofessional collaboration in zoonoses and foodborne disease prevention and control.

Dr Z. HALLAJ was of the opinion that this subject is well known but ignored from both sectors.

Dr R. BEN ISMAIL described the difficulties always raised by such kind of cooperation. Dr Z. HALLAJ expressed the need for building a consultancy group discussing and presenting solutions and examples for the strengthening of intersectoral collaboration. Dr D. TABBA stressed the importance of such workshop with the participation of all IOs concerned and member countries to conclude the results and improve the intersectoral collaboration.

Dr A. SEIMENIS presented the issue of International Workshop or Consultations on prevention and control strategies for zoonoses of interest to the MMERs.

The participants agreed on Rabies and Rift Valley Fever.

The last item, presented by Dr A. SEIMENIS, was the draft of a regional project on Brucellosis prevention and control in the Mediterranean & Middle East Regions (situation analysis & perspectives for a regional control programme).

Dr C. EDDI mentioned the importance of such projects and asked about an official request from the member countries.

Dr Z. HALLAJ stressed the need for updating the WHO/FAO/OIE Project of 1995 and preparing a Plan of Action with the proper budget to run the programme.
Finally, although the proposed brucellosis project is of particular importance, it has been considered that, due to its size and geographical area to cover, it would consume even up to 100% of the MZCC work lead, therefore, it would be more appropriate to leave it aside at the moment.