ORAL PRESENTATION

To be used thereafter as the OIE input in reply to the FAO AN21/47 request (also AN7/239)

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR WORLD FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

10th Session

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Preventing the spread of animal diseases and zoonoses through international trade and the movement of animals and products of animal origin is one of the primary objectives of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This is accomplished by establishing international standards that facilitate trade while minimising the risk of introducing infectious animal diseases and zoonoses and avoiding unjustified sanitary barriers. The OIE was founded in 1924; today, 167 countries are members providing a mechanism for prompt reporting of disease outbreaks, which is also one of the primary roles of the OIE. The OIE objectives and activities are focused on the following areas:

- To ensure transparency in the global animal disease and zoonosis situation.
- To collect, analyse and disseminate veterinary information.
- To provide expertise and encourage international solidarity in the control of animal diseases.
- Within its mandate under the WTO SPS Agreement, to safeguard world trade by publishing health standards for the movement of animals and animal products.
- To improve the legal framework and resources of national Veterinary Services.
- To provide a better guarantee of the safety of food of animal origin and to promote animal welfare.

The main issues for the OIE thus include inventory and characterisation, sustainable use and development, conservation, valuation, policy and legislation, documentation and information databases on animal and human health and food safety. Thus, vis-à-vis the AnGR, the following points should prevail from the OIE’s point of view:

2. Location and present state of conservation of these specific AnGR.
3. Location and present state of utilisation of these special AnGR.
4. Crossing, import of genetic material, etc. that might «dilute» genetic resistance to disease.
5. Eventual mapping of genes for genetic resistance for its use in industrial/commercial strains (poultry, swine, etc.).
The OIE can contribute to the AnGR in many ways:

- The main obstacle for the conservation and flow of animal genetic resources are sanitary/disease considerations. Legislation limiting the exchange of AnGR is the main cause of restriction of free flow of AnGR in all directions. The OIE contributes to the development of national, regional and global legislation to regulate this exchange, giving the relevant weights to risks and to the rights and obligations of farmers in the different countries to have access to the AnGR that they need. The Commission recommended that a study be undertaken to identify the ways in which animal genetic resources are currently exchanged, and how exchange practices affect the various stakeholders in the livestock sector. The OIE can provide inputs for this study.

- That in the follow-up mechanism proposed to facilitate field work in AnGR, the overall objectives of the OIE are taken into consideration vis-à-vis the monitoring of priorities for animal genetic resources.

- The OIE could participate actively, on request by the FAO, in the regional consultations proposed by the 3rd session of the ITWG-AnGR and makes this desire for involvement known to the FAO. The OIE is also willing to participate in the review of the «first draft of the Report on Strategic Priorities for Action, to determine regional priorities and initiate follow-up actions » that were presented to the Tenth Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture that took place at the FAO Headquarters in November 2004.

- The Commission agreed that the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources meet in 2006 to review the first draft of the first Report on the State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources, and to provide advice to the Commission to evaluate the follow-up mechanism. The OIE will monitor progress in the animal genetic resources area in relation to OIE activities, through participation as observer and, when necessary, through direct inputs.

- The Commission encourage countries to better inform and to involve their policy-makers in the process of preparing the first Report on the State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources to increase awareness of the roles and values of animal genetic resources, and to facilitate in its field of competence the implementation of priority actions identified in Country Reports and available regional priority reports. Among the policy-makers are many whose mandate coincides with that of the OIE, or are directly involved with OIE activities.

- The Commission agreed to complete the process of the development of the first Report at a first international technical conference on animal genetic resources in 2007. The OIE will be participating as stakeholder in this first international technical conference.
• Countries will continue to establish and strengthen their national focal points to enhance participation in the further development of the Global Strategy, including implementation of strategic priorities identified in the Country Reports, and consider maintaining their national consultative committees as appropriate to ensure stakeholder support and participation in the Global Strategy at the national level. The OIE will seek even better coordination between focal points for FAO (AnGR) and focal points for the OIE to address common issues.

• The Commission recommended that the FAO undertake a comprehensive review of DAD-IS (The Domestic Animal Diversity Information System) with the aim of making it easier for countries to use the System effectively, and to further develop DAD-IS as a useful communication tool. The OIE recommends that, whenever available and feasible, to include in the DAD-IS database, data relevant to genetic resistance to disease, specific zoonoses information and local animal genetic resources adaptability.

• The Commission recommended a study on recent developments in biotechnology, and current and potential use of biotechnologies, with a view to understanding constraints, especially for developing countries, in acquiring and using available biotechnologies relevant to animal genetic resources use, global development and conservation. The OIE is overall interested in biotechnology as related to animal health and supports this initiative with which it could collaborate.

• The Commission requested the FAO to investigate the feasibility of animal genetic resources genebanks, as a possibly cost-effective national and regional conservation measure, especially in the light of recent advances in the relevant technologies and methodologies. It was, however, noted that significant capacity would be required by countries to sustain such genebanks, and that in many developing countries, in situ conservation was the priority option. The OIE can make a meaningful contribution to developing health regulations for gene banks (exchange of genetic material, storage, etc.) and in situ livestock conservation actions.