

Reports

**of the Meetings of the OIE Regional Commissions
held during the 84th General Session**

Paris, 23 May 2016

NOTE FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

Draft Recommendations proposed during the meetings of the Regional Commissions held during the General Session must be presented again for adoption during the next Regional Commission Conference held in the respective regions, so as to be examined and possibly adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates during the General Session that follows the Regional Conferences.

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Paris, 23 May 2016

The OIE Regional Commission for Africa met on 23 May 2016 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 98 participants, including Delegates and observers from 34 Members of the Commission, 2 observer countries, and representatives from 5 international or regional organisations:

Members of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Rep. of the), Congo (Dem. Rep. of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Observer countries/territories: France, United States of America.

International/regional organisations: AU-IBAR, CEBEVIRHA³⁹, FAO, IGAD⁴⁰, WAEMU⁴¹.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Komla Batawui (Togo), President of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa, Dr Botlhe Michael Modisane (South Africa), President of the World Assembly of Delegates, and Dr Karim Tounkara, OIE Regional Representative for Africa.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, described in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted.

2. Report on OIE Council meetings

Dr Botlhe Michael Modisane, Delegate of South Africa and President of the World Assembly of Delegates, began his presentation by providing details on Council members and the geographical rotation of the office of President of the OIE. He pointed out that it was customary for the President to have first held the office of Vice-President, which demanded a degree of continuity of the Delegate in question.

Dr Modisane then informed Delegates that the OIE Council had met three times since the last General Session at which the Council was elected. The meetings were held in October 2015, February 2016 and May 2016 and looked at issues of strategic importance for the OIE, including major administrative matters, some of which would be presented to the 84th General Session in the form of draft resolutions. He added that the Council had continued to discuss implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020), particularly at the February 2016 meeting.

³⁹ CEBEVIRHA: Economic Commission on Cattle, Meat and Fish Resources in the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)

⁴⁰ IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development

⁴¹ WAEMU: West African Economic and Monetary Union

Dr Modisane provided a brief review of the most important issues addressed at the Council meetings, as follows:

1. Detailed appraisal of the 83rd General Session with a view to suggesting improvements for the 84th General Session.
2. Considering the significantly improved recovery of arrears in recent years, the Council wished to review the procedure for implementing Article 5 of the General Rules of the OIE. The Council decided that Member Countries with arrears of five years or more would not be entitled to vote at the 2016 General Session and their Delegates would not receive the Delegate's allowance.
3. A specific point was emphasised with regard to the procedure for accessing dossiers from Member Countries seeking recognition for official status: namely that Member Countries applying for recognition of their status are required to respond, within 10 days, to requests from other Member Countries for information on the dossier within the 60-day commenting period.
4. After receiving requests for new OIE Representations to be opened, the Council decided that it would first have to consider which criteria need to be taken into account when deciding whether to open a new OIE office, given that the Organisation is already experiencing financial difficulties with the operation of several Representations.
5. The Council endorsed the principle of a performance evaluation framework document for the OIE Specialist Commissions and suggested that indicators be used. All the Presidents and Members of the four Specialist Commissions have been informed of this new procedure. The Council examined the initial proposals for establishing an evaluation grid.
6. The Council also encouraged efforts to make the Spanish and French language versions of Specialist Commission reports available as quickly as possible to provide sufficient time for comments.
7. It discussed the issue of access to reports of the *ad hoc* groups and the possibility of making these reports available on the website.
8. The Council considered agreements with other international organisations. The Council approved the signing of agreements with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Indian Ocean Commission.
9. It discussed the platform provided in the Asia/Pacific region to facilitate the exchange of information among countries in the region. This facility does not exempt Member Countries from submitting their comments officially to the OIE. This initiative could be extended to the other regions if it proves successful following several months in operation.

At the Council meetings in February and May 2016, special attention was paid to administrative, budgetary and statutory issues, as well as to the preparation of the 84th General Session.

With regard to preparing the 84th General Session, the Council considered proposals from the Director General on the organisation of the General Session and reviewed the Delegates' nominations for awards in the Gold and Merit categories. The Council also validated the working programme presented by the Director General, prior to its approval by the Assembly, as well as the new organisational chart, which will be finalised and implemented after the General Session.

Dr Modisane informed the Commission of the various activities in which he had participated in his capacity as President of the OIE, including: the OIE Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction, held in Paris, France, from 30 June to 2 July 2015; the Conference on global elimination of dog-mediated human rabies, held in Geneva on 10 and 11 December 2015; and the 29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 14 to 18 September 2015.

Finally, Dr Modisane reported that, in line with Resolution XVII of 28 May 2004 on the establishment of a World Animal Health and Welfare Fund, the 10th meeting of the Management Committee, chaired by the President of the Assembly and comprising two members appointed by the Council, had been held on 18 May 2016 to review and endorse the financial and technical reports submitted by the OIE Headquarters.

3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa

Dr Komla Batawui, Delegate of Togo and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa, began his presentation by providing details on the members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Africa, elected in the last General Session.

Dr Batawui reported that the monitoring of activities since the General Session in May 2015 revealed the following highlights for Africa:

1. Strong participation of African Delegates at the OIE Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction, held in Paris (France) from 30 June to 2 July 2015.
2. The participation of 74 Africans, including both experts and OIE Delegates at the important global conference: “Global Elimination of Dog-mediated Rabies – The Time is Now”, held in Geneva (Switzerland) on 10 and 11 December 2015, and organised jointly by WHO and the OIE in collaboration with FAO and GARC.
3. Meeting to prepare the roadmap for the eradication of PPR, held in Dakar from 8 to 11 May 2016, in line with the recommendations of the meeting in Abidjan, held from 31 March to 2 April 2015.
4. The African Union - Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) organised the 8th Pan African meeting of OIE Delegates to coordinate a joint position of sanitary standards, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 to 28 April 2016.

With regard to capacity-building seminars and seminars dedicated to National Focal Points organised by the OIE, Dr Batawui commented that Africa benefited from the organisation of two events. A regional seminar for OIE Focal Points for Veterinary Products, held in Dakar (Senegal), from 21 to 23 March 2016; and a Continental conference on the role of veterinary paraprofessionals in Africa, held in Pretoria (South Africa) from 13 to 15 October 2015.

Dr Batawui reported on the continued implementation of the recommendations of the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa, held in Rabat (Morocco) from 16 to 20 February 2015, concerning cross-border movement of animals and animal products and transboundary disease control campaigns.

Finally, Dr Batawui reported on the future prospects by highlighting the organisation of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa, to be held in Swakopmund, Namibia, in February 2017.

4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for Africa and the OIE Sub-Regional Representations for Southern Africa, North Africa, and Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa

Dr Karim Tounkara, OIE Regional Representative for Africa, on behalf of all OIE Representatives in the region, summarised the activities carried out by the Regional Representation and the three OIE Sub-Regional Representations for Africa between May 2015 and May 2016, and their planned activities for the rest of the year.

He said that the activities of the OIE Regional Representation for Africa (RR-AF) had focused mainly on: providing technical assistance in the field of animal health; facilitating better animal disease reporting; capacity-building; and improving governance. With regard to technical assistance, he gave details on the activities in which the RR-AF had participated. The RR-AF also encouraged and assisted Member Countries in submitting their contribution to the OIE database on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Dr Tounkara gave details about capacity-building activities, including: implementation of the animal health component of the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS); the joint OIE/World Health Organization (WHO) external evaluation missions of the post-Ebola preparedness project in Guinea Bissau and Niger supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID); participation in the OIE Performance of Veterinary Services [PVS] Evaluation mission to Guinea Bissau; and assisting Guinea and Senegal in formulating the World Bank Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement Project (REDISSE). The RR-AF organised a regional seminar in Dakar (Senegal) for OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products and helped to prepare the Reinforcing Veterinary Governance in Africa (VET-GOV) Legislation Seminar for Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to be held in Lomé (Togo).

With regard to disease reporting, Dr Tounkara said that the RR-AF encouraged countries infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza and African swine fever to send regular weekly follow-up reports. He added that, jointly with the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, the RR-AF also encouraged Member Countries to send all due six-monthly reports. As regards governance, he reported that the RR-AF encouraged all Member Countries to pay their statutory annual financial contribution to the OIE. He also mentioned the VET-GOV Steering Committee meetings attended by RR-AF. He said that RR-AF continued to act as temporary secretariat for the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Centre in Bamako (Mali) and as permanent secretariat for the Regional Steering Committee of the Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) for Africa.

Finally, Dr Tounkara reported on the work plan for 2016, saying that it would focus on the three strategic objectives of the Sixth Strategic Plan. For Strategic Objective 1 (securing animal health and welfare by appropriate risk management), activities will concern *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR), contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), highly pathogenic avian influenza, African swine fever and anthrax. The main activity on Strategic Objective 2 (establishing trust through transparency and communication) will be encouraging Member Countries to meet their obligations regarding animal disease notification and submission of statutory reports. For the implementation of Strategic Objective 3 (ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Veterinary Services), he said that the RR-AF planned to continue providing technical support to Member Countries, to organise technical seminars and to encourage Twinning projects.

Dr Tounkara reported that the activities of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for East Africa and the Horn of Africa (SRR-EA) were geared towards (co-)organising several capacity-building events and regional conferences and seminars, as well as managing relations with regional organisations such as the African Union institutions (primarily the Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources [IBAR] and the Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre [PANVAC]), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and, increasingly, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), for which a cooperation agreement will be submitted for approval by the World Assembly of Delegates at the 84th General Session.

Dr Tounkara provided details on major SRR-EA outputs, which were not always conducted in the East Africa region itself, including: facilitating the fourth annual meeting of the Deans of the Southern and Eastern Africa Association of Veterinary Educational Establishments (SEAAVEE); and coordinating two regional training programmes on harmonisation of veterinary legislation at community level, organised with the support of AU-IBAR under the VET-GOV programme, and the fourth cycle in the ongoing training of OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products. He also commented on the co-organisation and coordination of the inaugural continental conference for veterinary para-professionals, held in Pretoria (South Africa) in October 2015 with the aim of improving the quality of field work conducted in Africa by strengthening the linkages and collaboration between veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals.

Dr Tounkara reported that the no-cost extension of the VET-GOV programme (up to end of July 2017) had enabled the OIE to fund new capacity-building programmes and to support novel initiatives for reaching regional consensus on OIE matters.

Dr Tounkara added that the SRR-EA continued to support Member Countries and regional economic communities with advice on optimising the implementation of animal health and welfare policies and regulations, through: steering committee mechanisms (AU-IBAR, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology [ICIPE], IGAD and IOC programmes); roadmap-type meetings (PPR); visits to country authorities; and the provision of constructive technical comments or support. He said that the SRR-EA actively encouraged and supported applications for Twinning projects in the region, not only for laboratory but increasingly for veterinary statutory bodies and veterinary education establishments. It has also participated in international initiatives, such as: the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance (LEAP) Partnership (on climate change mitigation in livestock production); the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (on biological threats); the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) programme (on trade facilitation and sanitary and phytosanitary [SPS] measures); and the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW).

Dr Tounkara reported that a new three-year European Parliament-funded project on strengthening Veterinary Services in developing countries had recently been signed and was currently in its inception phase. The project is expected to support many of the OIE-led VET-GOV activities (PVS Pathway missions, support to veterinary legislation and capacity-building for OIE National Focal Points), along with the support to the establishment of a continental vaccine bank for rabies and targeted rabies control activities in the Maghreb region and the Republic of Kenya, where the project will support the implementation of Kenya's rabies elimination strategy.

Dr Tounkara said that the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for North Africa (SRR-NA) had conducted various activities in connection with the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA) and had consolidated a number of relationships, in particular with the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD). The SRR-NA had continued to work to strengthen veterinary education in the Mediterranean basin and within the framework of the VET-GOV programme under the auspices of AU-IBAR.

He said that, over the reporting period, the SRR-NA had revitalised the sub-networks of REMESA, as requested by the REMESA Joint Permanent Committee (JPC/Chief Veterinary Officers platform) at the JPC meeting in Heraklion (Greece) in March 2015. To this end, various workshops were held in Tunis (Tunisia) to convene the four thematic REMESA sub-networks on veterinary laboratories, epidemiological surveillance, socio-economics and communication on priority diseases, such as rabies, avian influenza and foot and mouth disease (FMD). Not only did the REMESA JPC meetings in Algiers (Algeria) in November 2015 and Toledo (Spain) in May 2016 reiterate the importance of establishing a regional FMD vaccine bank in the REMESA region (on which progress had been made), North African countries were also encouraged to harmonise their vaccination strategies. Effective livestock identification was considered crucial in order to implement effective traceability of animal movements. The SRR-NA therefore held a workshop in March 2016 to harmonise the FMD vaccination strategy in North Africa, attended by the Chief Veterinary Officers concerned and leading international experts on FMD, where it was agreed that harmonisation of the vaccination strategy in North Africa would be based on an assessment of risk in the region. Further information (e.g. surveillance data, field research) is being collected in order to further the harmonised strategy. Subsequent short-term actions will include consolidating the FMD vaccination strategy in the North Africa region and starting to discuss livestock identification in the region.

Dr Tounkara said that the SRR-NA had also organised the fourth General Assembly of the Mediterranean Network of Establishments for Veterinary Education (REEV-Med) in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in October 2015, with the aim of strengthening veterinary education in the Mediterranean basin.

He reported that the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Southern Africa (SRR-SA) had hosted a Continental conference on veterinary para-professionals with the assistance of the SRR-EA and OIE Headquarters. The SRR-SA had also co-organised a seminar on the harmonisation of veterinary legislation for Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries, jointly with the AU-IBAR office. The SRR-SA is working very closely with the SADC Programme Officer responsible for animal health.

Dr Tounkara noted that, as the sub-region included countries with the highest levels of compliance with OIE international standards, they were officially recognised as free from a number of transboundary animal diseases. This had given them access to lucrative international markets. In line with the strategic objectives of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan, the SRR-SA constantly encourages and assists Member Countries to continue using OIE international standards to control animal diseases and to apply for disease freedom where applicable – especially for PPR, FMD and rabies, for which global control/eradication strategies already exist or are under development.

Dr Tounkara said that the occurrence of FMD and PPR during the current reporting period was of particular concern. Eight countries had reported new outbreaks of FMD over the past 12 months, while Zambia had reported serological occurrence of PPR in the country. This brought to a total of four the number of countries affected by PPR in the sub-region. In

response to a vaccine shortage during recent events, the latest SADC Livestock Technical Committee meetings recommended the establishment of an FMD vaccine or antigen bank to hold buffer stocks of vaccine for use during outbreaks. SADC has taken note of and promised to give consideration to a sub-regional vaccine or antigen bank.

He reported that the Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) had transferred rinderpest material to AU-PANVAC in Ethiopia for safekeeping, in accordance with a resolution taken by OIE Member Countries on rinderpest virus sequestration.

The SRR-SA had hosted a workshop on procedures for official recognition of disease status and for the endorsement of official control programmes of Member Countries for FMD and PPR.

Dr Tounkara reported that the SRR-SA has an arrangement with the SADC Secretariat where, following each SADC Livestock Technical Committee meeting, Delegates meet at the OIE offices to reflect on the outcomes of major OIE events of the year, such as the OIE General Session and Regional Commission meetings, as well as OIE conferences and workshops for members, in order to gauge what follow-up action might be required and how their countries/sub-region could benefit from these.

Finally, Dr Tounkara reported that the SRR-SA office would be conducting several activities over the next reporting period (May 2016-May 2017), including: jointly with the German Government, supporting Namibia with its national rabies control programme (May 2015-2018); supporting Lesotho during World Rabies Day on 28 September 2016; organising a regional seminar for National Focal Points on laboratories (English-speaking Member Countries), on 13-16 December 2016.

5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (with a questionnaire to Members) for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session:

- “Global efforts towards the eradication of dog mediated human rabies by 2030”

6. Selection of Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (without questionnaire) for inclusion in the agenda of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa:

- “Unfolding the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of peste des petits ruminants (PPR) in Africa”

7. Organisation of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa to be held in Swakopmund, Namibia, in February 2017

Dr Adrianatus Florentius Maseke, Delegate of Namibia, reiterated the commitment of his Minister at the opening ceremony highlighting that his country was willing and honoured to hold this important regional event. He invited all Delegates to attend the conference.

He gave a general description of Swakopmund and a brief account of the different actions that Namibia had undertaken to start organising the conference.

To conclude, Dr Florentius Maseke provided general information about hotel accommodation and transport, giving assurances that full details would be sent to participants in a timely manner in collaboration with the OIE.

8. Status of notifications by Members in Africa

Dr Lina Awada, Veterinary Epidemiologist at the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, gave a brief update on the status of notifications by Members in the Region as of 20 May 2016. She started by providing detailed regional information on compliance with reporting for 2015, separately for terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases. Then, she showed the percentage of Members with outstanding reports and encouraged them to submit the reports, not only for 2015 but also for previous years, emphasising the importance of timely disease reporting by countries/territories through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and of their providing other epidemiological information on disease prevention and control. Dr Awada also gave an overview of the OIE-listed diseases and infections currently of major interest in the region. Dr Awada concluded by presenting the results of the online survey “Evaluation of WAHIS, 10 years after the launch”, which was designed to gather feedback from Veterinary Authorities on their level of satisfaction as WAHIS users, the challenges experienced during the notification process and suggestions for improvement. She highlighted the topics most frequently cited by respondents in the region as needing improvement.

9. State of play on the implementation of the recommendations of the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission, held in Rabat, Morocco, in February 2015

Dr Rachid Bouguedour, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for North Africa, presented a brief state of play regarding the two recommendations adopted at the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa, held in Rabat, Morocco, in February 2015.

Recommendation 1 “*Impact of animal diseases on animal productivity and public health in Africa*” had led to the following actions: full involvement of civil society, farmers’ associations (Association pour la Promotion de l’Elevage au Sahel et en Savane) and research institutions (West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development [WECARD], International Centre for Livestock Research and Development in the Subhumid Zone [CIRDES]) was sought for formulating PRAPS; to build capacity, a training course was held for OIE National Focal Points for veterinary products (Senegal, March 2016) and one is planned for OIE National Focal Points for animal disease notification (Tunisia, July 2016); routine advocacy during participation in official missions; ongoing support and guidance to Member Countries to encourage compliance with their obligations on disease reporting (immediate notification of epidemiologically important events, follow-up reports and six-monthly and annual reports); assistance to Member Countries in the preparation of contingency plans as part of activities under the PRAPS animal health component and participation in relevant workshops, including those on highly pathogenic avian influenza, anthrax and African swine fever; facilitation of cooperation among Member Countries on early warning and early response as part of PRAPS animal health component activities; participation in the joint OIE/WHO external evaluation missions of the DFID post-Ebola preparedness project in Guinea Bissau and Niger; in the context of early warning and early response, an inter-regional conference was held on Rift Valley fever (Middle East-Horn of Africa) to seek new options for trade, prevention and control; the submission of a questionnaire on AMR in the African region was facilitated in order to collect data on the use of antimicrobial agents in food-producing animals in OIE Member Countries; within the framework of REMESA – and to build the capacity of Veterinary Services – various workshops were held for North African National

Focal Points responsible for veterinary laboratories, epidemiological surveillance, socio-economics and communication on priority diseases for the region, such as rabies, avian influenza and FMD; under the auspices of REMESA, a project for establishing an OIE FMD vaccine bank for the North Africa region is under way in compliance with the REMESA resolution on FMD.

Recommendation 2 on “*Cross-border movements of animals and animal products and their relevance to the epidemiology of animal diseases in Africa*” had led to the following actions: one PVS Evaluation Follow-up mission undertaken in Guinea Bissau to strengthen the capacity of its Veterinary Services; Veterinary Legislation Support Programme missions to Chad and Gambia were facilitated and the regional harmonisation of veterinary legislation among ECOWAS members is currently being facilitated; ongoing assistance and support provided to Member Countries in a bid to improve their transboundary animal disease status as part of PRAPS activities; contribution to the workshop on the formulation of a PPR roadmap for Central and West Africa; focusing attention on the role of animal movements in the emergence and re-emergence of CBPP as part of PRAPS activities; the 11th REMESA JPC meeting in Algiers (Algeria) in November 2015 decided to further the establishment of formal and informal mapping of animal movements in the North Africa region (Tunisia conducted a study and mapped internal movements) and to start discussing and developing a regional animal identification strategy.

10. Animal health programmes and activities related to the strengthening of Veterinary Services in Africa

Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS)

Dr Karim Tounkara briefly commented on the PPR Global Strategy and PRAPS.

He pointed out that PPR was a highly contagious disease of sheep and goats caused by a morbillivirus closely related to rinderpest virus. It is considered to be one of the most harmful diseases of small ruminant livestock in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

He added that the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR had been presented at the FAO-OIE International Conference for the control and eradication of PPR, held in Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire) from 31 March to 2 April 2015. The strategy has three components: PPR control and eradication; strengthening Veterinary Services; and improving the prevention and control of other major diseases of small ruminants.

The key tools for controlling and eradicating PPR are: the OIE WAHIS information system and the FAO Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) Global Animal Disease Information System (EMPRES-i); the PPR Monitoring and Assessment Tool (PMAT); post-vaccination evaluation (PVE); vaccines; surveillance; laboratory diagnostics; regional and international laboratory networks; regional and international epidemiology networks; the PPR Global Research and Expertise Network (PPR-GREN); OIE standards and the OIE PVS Pathway.

The provisions of the PPR Global Strategy include the preparation of regional roadmaps under the auspices of GF-TADs, coupled with regional meetings, if possible on an annual basis, to commit countries to working in a harmonised and synchronised manner to control the disease.

Dr Tounkara explained that PRAPS was funded by the World Bank and its main objective was to improve access to essential productive assets, services and markets for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in selected cross-border areas and along transhumance routes across six Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal). He added that PRAPS included an important animal health component (20% of the total budget), which has been programmed taking into account the OIE PVS Pathway outcomes in the targeted countries. Regional coordination of activities under this component has been delegated to the OIE under a partnership agreement with the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). The technical team responsible for implementing project activities consists of three experts and has been based at the RR-AF since 1 February 2016. The animal health regional component is in three parts: coordination, targeted technical support and training.

Rabies

Dr Rachid Bouguedour, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for North Africa, said that, in connection with REMESA, representatives from five North African countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) had attended a seminar held by the Regional Animal Health Communication Network (RECOMSA) in Tunis (Tunisia) on 4 and 5 November 2015 on the rabies communication strategy, awareness and training for Maghreb countries. The participants represented various organisations involved in the control of zoonoses, especially rabies. In addition to RECOMSA focal points, several ministries were represented: the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior (in charge of stray dog control) and the Ministry of Education (as children are the main victims of dog bites and hence rabies). Several representatives of the Pasteur Institute also attended the seminar.

He said that, following a rabies status review presented by experts from the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES) and the Tunisian Directorate-General of Veterinary Services (DGSV), highlighting both epidemiological and economic aspects, each country had presented examples of rabies communication campaigns developed at national level. Students from the National School of Veterinary Medicine of Sidi Thabet (Tunisia) explained to participants the actions they had undertaken on the subject.

Finally, Dr Bouguedour reported that communication experts from the OIE, WHO and a communication agency, together with a sociologist, had trained around 30 participants on the basic principles for implementing an efficient rabies control campaign and hence for implementing the global eradication strategy.

Dr Bouguedour went on to mention the OIE rabies vaccine bank, which recently procured and delivered canine rabies vaccines to Tunisia, with European Union funding to support the implementation of a national dog vaccination campaign against rabies in at-risk areas; 80,000 doses of rabies vaccines were delivered to Tunisia in late 2015. This was the first step in implementing a national vaccination campaign launched by the Tunisian authorities on 22 January 2016 on national rabies awareness day. The launch was attended by all regional officers in charge of implementing agricultural development and animal health actions in each Tunisian governorate. The Ministry of Health and ministry in charge of local and regional authorities were also represented, as were WHO, FAO and the OIE. The media were also present.

At the launch, the OIE Representative highlighted the role of the OIE vaccine bank in the global process and the need to improve tools for communication among all stakeholders. Tunisia's Minister of Agriculture, Mr Saad Seddik, warmly thanked the OIE for its support in seeking to eradicate rabies from Tunisia.

Dr Moetapele Letshwenyo, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Southern Africa, briefly presented the Namibia rabies control project.

He began by saying that rabies remained endemic in most parts of Africa where it causes suffering and death, especially among children and people in rural areas, who were the most vulnerable groups. In an effort to control the disease, Dr Letshwenyo explained that the OIE, WHO and FAO had joined forces under a Tripartite alliance to combat rabies using the "One Health" approach. To this end, a conference on global elimination of dog-mediated human rabies was held in Geneva (Switzerland) in December 2015. One of the conference resolutions was to eliminate dog-mediated human rabies by the year 2030.

He went on to say that countries in the SADC sub-region had been striving to control rabies since time immemorial. According to the 2011 SADC Animal Health Year Book, rabies is the second most reported disease and has the widest geographical distribution.

Dr Letshwenyo reported that, in March 2015, the Government of Namibia had launched its national rabies control strategy with the aim of eliminating human rabies deaths through effective dog rabies control. Shortly after the strategy was launched, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany expressed its interest in supporting dog rabies control in southern Africa, with Namibia the first country to benefit from this assistance. Germany provided funding for three years. The project is implemented under OIE oversight and aims to support Namibia in implementing its national rabies control strategy, and will also benefit from the OIE rabies vaccine bank.

The project has five overarching goals:

- to analyse and evaluate the current rabies situation and control strategy;
- to improve performance of Veterinary Services with respect to rabies control;
- to enhance rabies surveillance and monitoring of vaccination campaigns;
- to implement cooperation between the human health and animal health sectors as part of the "One Health" concept; and
- to set up a pilot regional rabies vaccine bank for dog vaccination.

Dr Letshwenyo explained that the project included a sub-grant with the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI), an OIE Reference Laboratory for rabies based in Germany. The project began in May 2015 and will be implemented in two consecutive phases: a pilot phase from March 2016 to February 2017 and the roll-out phase from March 2017 to March 2018.

He added that a three-year project action plan had been developed and vaccinators had been trained in proper dog-handling and vaccination. Specialist dog-handling equipment was also procured for use during training and mass dog vaccination. A mass dog vaccination campaign was due to start on the 2 May 2016 and run until mid-June 2016, after which there will be booster vaccinations before the project is rolled out to other districts under phase two.

Dr Letshwenyo concluded by citing this project as an example of how SADC countries were addressing animal health issues individually and collectively under the global initiatives.

Reinforcing Veterinary Governance in Africa (VET-GOV) programme

Dr Samuel Wakhusama, OIE Deputy Sub-Regional Representative for Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa on behalf of Dr Walter Masiga, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa, presented a report on progress with the VET-GOV programme and inception of the “Strengthening Veterinary Services in Developing Countries + Rabies” (SVSDC+R) project.

He began by describing the VET-GOV programme, a European Union-funded continental programme implemented by three technical agencies: AU-IBAR, FAO and OIE. The project began in 2012 and – following a no-cost extension approved by the donor in early 2015 – is expected to finish at the end of July 2017.

Dr Wakhusama added that, through a separate contribution agreement with the European Commission, the OIE had implemented a number of activities within its specific mandate. They include ongoing PVS Pathway missions (mainly PVS Gap Analysis missions, PVS Evaluation follow-up missions and laboratory support missions at this stage) but with special emphasis on the Veterinary Legislation Support Programme, aimed at supporting Member Countries in updating their national legislation to meet international standards. This process includes the implementation of identification missions, followed, where appropriate, by a long-term commitment to work on improving (or in some cases, developing) specific pieces of legislation, through a formal agreement between the OIE and the country.

Since the VET-GOV programme was established, more than 48 PVS Pathway Evaluation missions have been conducted and funded through the programme. Fourteen Veterinary Legislation Support Programme missions have been conducted. A total of 13 VET-GOV-funded PVS Gap Analysis missions and 10 VET-GOV-funded PVS Evaluation Follow-up missions have been conducted to date.

The VET-GOV programme also supports many capacity-building activities for veterinary officials, including a series of joint AU-IBAR, FAO, OIE regional seminars on harmonisation of veterinary legislation at community level. The OIE component of VET-GOV also supports training for OIE National Focal Points for specific issues, such as those for veterinary products, as well as initiatives for harmonising veterinary education in southern and eastern Africa.

The main achievement in terms of continental policy-building was, without doubt, the inaugural continental conference for veterinary para-professionals, held in Pretoria (South Africa) in October 2015. It was organised by the OIE with funding from the VET-GOV programme.

Since August 2015, all information on the OIE component of the VET-GOV programme has been centralised on a specific website accessed through the OIE Africa website.

Finally, Dr Wakhusama reported that a new three-year European Parliament-funded project entitled “Strengthening Veterinary Services in Developing Countries” had recently been signed and was currently in its inception phase. The project is expected to provide complementary support to many of the OIE-led VET-GOV activities (PVS Pathway missions, support for veterinary legislation and capacity-building for OIE Focal Points), along with the support to the establishment of a continental vaccine bank for rabies with targeted activities in the Maghreb region and the Republic of Kenya, where the project will support the implementation of Kenya’s rabies elimination strategy. The new project supported the latest round of training for OIE National Focal Points for Veterinary Products (Dakar, 2016) and, later this year, it will support training for Focal Points for other issues (communication, wildlife). It will also support initiatives for regional cooperation between veterinary statutory bodies in the SADC region.

11. Proposal for designation of a new OIE Collaborating Centre

Dr Mbargou Lo, Delegate of Senegal, presented the Regional Commission with an application for the OIE to consider the current OIE Reference Laboratory for Control of Veterinary Medicinal Products in Sub-Saharan Africa to be merged with the current OIE Collaborating Centre for Training Veterinary Officials and Diagnosing Infectious Animal Diseases and Zoonoses in Tropical Africa to form an “OIE Collaborating Centre for the Training of Official Veterinarians, the Diagnosis of Infectious Animal Diseases and Zoonoses and the Control of Veterinary Drugs in West and Central Africa”.

Dr Lo provided a brief review of the proposal.

The Delegate of the Republic of Congo expressed his concern regarding the proposal presented by Senegal. He stated that such a proposal should have been previously consulted by the Members States of the EISMV (*École Inter-États des Sciences et Médecine Vétérinaires de Dakar*) before being submitted to the OIE for consideration.

The Dean of the EISMV explained that the EISMV is an independent institution and thus, it is free to present such a proposal as the proposal constitutes a technical issue that has a positive impact for the EISMV at regional and international levels. He subsequently clarified that the proposal was presented by the Delegate of Senegal because the Headquarters of the EISMV is based in Senegal, and, following OIE rules, any proposal presented to the Regional Commission should be made by the Delegate of the country.

The Delegate of Zimbabwe asked for clarification regarding the procedure for submission and approval of a new Collaborating Centre.

Dr Modisane reminded the participants of the meeting that any application for new Collaborating Centre was always democratic and science based. Thus, any accreditation procedure required the validation of the Regional Commission, Scientific Commission, Council and finally, the endorsement of the World Assembly of Delegates. He finally confirmed that the Delegate of Senegal was only presenting the application as requested by the OIE Headquarters as the EISMV was based in Senegal.

The Commission finally supported Senegal’s proposal, which will be submitted for approval by the Scientific Commission. Once approved by the Scientific Commission, it will be submitted for endorsement by the Council and then by the World Assembly of Delegates.

12. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session

Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head of the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began her presentation by saying that the 83rd World Assembly of OIE Delegates in 2015 had adopted Resolution No. 26 on combating antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals, following Resolution No. 25 on veterinary products adopted in 2009 and recommendations made at the first OIE Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals in 2013. One major point of Resolution 26 relates to the collection of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals with a view to establishing a global database. Major progress has been achieved in this area and OIE Member Countries have made considerable efforts. Indeed, a response rate of over 70% to the challenging questionnaire is seen as a real success. The results of the first phase of the project will be presented under Technical Item 2 on Tuesday.

She went on to explain that Resolution 26 also invited Member Countries to follow the guidance of the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR developed with the support of the OIE and in the spirit of the “One Health” approach. Since the Global Action Plan was adopted in May 2015, the fight against AMR under the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Collaboration has reached an unprecedented political level.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed out that the issue of AMR had been mentioned at the G7 Health Ministers' meeting in Berlin (Germany) in October 2015, attended by Dr Monique Eloit, as well as at the recent G7 Agriculture Ministers' meeting in Japan in April 2016. The next step envisioned is a resolution or high-level document on AMR endorsed by the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. To prepare this important event, in April 2016 the Tripartite hosted a High-Level Dialogue on AMR at the United Nations in New York to raise awareness of AMR and to invite participants to follow up with their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel concluded by saying that the OIE and its Member Countries had made major efforts in recent years to update and complete the standards and to adopt ambitious recommendations. Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed to the need to collectively communicate on these achievements and to seek solidarity to support Member Countries in progressing with the implementation of standards, taking a step-wise approach. To this end, she noted that the OIE Council had proposed Technical Item 2 on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through a "One Health Approach": Actions and OIE Strategy, which would address OIE achievements and projects and would provide the basis for the OIE strategy.

13. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE

African Union - Inter african Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

Prof. Ahmed Elswalhy, AU-IBAR Director, gave a brief review of the activities carried out by AU-IBAR in collaboration with or jointly with the OIE.

He said that, since June 2015, AU-IBAR had continued to carry out interventions in partnership with the OIE, FAO, regional economic communities, AU-PANVAC, African Union Member States, international and national research institutions, academic institutions, national, regional and continental organisations of farmers and other stakeholders, and NGOs.

Prof. Elswalhy explained that six projects were continental in scope, while two regional projects were being implemented in the IGAD region and two national projects were being implemented in Somalia. The formulation of a Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA) and a project for "Sustainable development for livestock for livelihoods for Africa" (Live2Africa) has been completed. Live2Africa will support the implementation of strategic approaches to strengthen partnerships and build the capacity of regional economic communities and African Union Member States to implement LiDeSA.

He reported that the project Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard Setting Organisations (PANSPSO) had ended in December 2015, following which AU-IBAR had established a Standards and Trade Secretariat to sustain the building of common African positions on international standards for animal health and food safety.

Prof. Elswalhy said that a revised Pan-African PPR Strategy, aligned with the Global PPR Strategy, had been translated into the four official African Union languages. He added that AU-IBAR had participated in FAO/OIE meetings for maintaining global freedom from rinderpest.

Finally, he reported that AU-IBAR had convened technical meetings to initiate implementation of the animal welfare agenda in Africa.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Dr Berhanu Bedane, Animal Production and Health Officer at FAO Regional Office for Africa, presented the FAO's contribution to hunger and poverty eradication through livestock production and health.

He explained that FAO actions were designed to eradicate hunger and poverty while preserving natural resources, in accordance with FAO's strategic programmes, regional initiatives and country needs. These undertakings consider global and continental priorities as set out in the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa's Transformative Agenda 2063.

He added that, to achieve the goals, FAO promoted increased livestock production guided by appropriate policy, biodiversity conservation, gender balance in the livestock sector, value chain development, safe animal product trade, and building resilience to natural disasters and major disease outbreaks.

Dr Bedane explained that FAO in Africa worked in partnership to develop healthy and productive livestock for improved food security and economic growth through intervention strategies targeting transboundary animal diseases, such as FMD, PPR, African swine fever, CBPP and high-impact endemic diseases, including vector-borne and parasitic diseases. FAO builds capacity, providing training and equipment for disease surveillance, laboratory diagnosis and control. FAO gathers and analyses disease intelligence for early warning. Countries are supported in designing livestock policies and veterinary legislation. The "One Health" approach is used to control zoonoses and non-zoonotic diseases that reduce the supply of food of animal origin, undermining nutrition security, livelihoods, economic growth and disease resilience. FAO, together with the OIE and WHO, is leading the way in tackling antimicrobial resistance issues.

West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)

Dr Soumana Diallo, Representative of the WAEMU Commission, reported that, in connection with implementing the WAEMU Agricultural Policy, the WAEMU Commission had embarked on a number of reforms in the field of animal health, including zoonoses and food safety.

He explained that the reforms were aimed, first and foremost, at harmonising veterinary pharmaceutical legislation. The second area of reform is to build the capacity of Veterinary Services through the adoption of a WAEMU strategic plan to strengthen the Veterinary Services of Member States.

A previous reform related to the safety of animals and animal-derived foodstuffs, a regulation was adopted in 2007 on the safety of plants, animals and foods in WAEMU. This regulation is being revised with the support of an OIE expert. The WAEMU Commission has established a regional scientific committee to assess food safety risks and to provide scientific advice.

Dr Diallo went on to discuss the reform of support projects for the control and eradication of animal diseases. Through the Regional Fund for Agricultural Development (RFAD), the WAEMU Commission supports its Member States in controlling certain animal diseases, such as anthrax, Newcastle disease and rabies. With OIE support, it has also developed two studies to devise a regional strategy and coordinated national control programmes for CBPP and Newcastle disease.

Lastly, he reported on the adoption of a directive guaranteeing and organising the freedom of movement and right of establishment within WAEMU of veterinarians who are nationals of another WAEMU Member State, and establishing a College of Presidents of national orders of Veterinary Doctors that henceforth will be responsible for regulating veterinary practice within the WAEMU area.

14. OFFLU – The importance of contributing avian influenza genetic sequence data for pandemic preparedness

Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began her presentation by saying that the OIE/FAO network of expertise on animal influenza (OFFLU) had been established jointly by the two organisations to support and coordinate global efforts to prevent, detect and control important influenza strains in animals. One of the network's core objectives is to share avian influenza (AI) genetic sequence data with WHO in order to assist with the selection of the most appropriate circulating viruses for seasonal human vaccines, which can include animal viruses posing a potential pandemic threat.

She explained that, since 2010, OFFLU had contributed more than 1,000 genetic sequences of zoonotic AI viruses isolated from animal samples by OIE/FAO reference centres and by national and regional laboratories, which are shared at twice-yearly WHO vaccine composition meetings to identify relevant virus strains for use in human vaccines. OFFLU would like to thank all the laboratories involved and Member Countries for this generous contribution.

Unfortunately, the amount of genetic and antigenic data submitted by OFFLU to WHO vaccine composition meetings has decreased significantly in recent years in spite of ongoing and new AI outbreaks in various countries. This is of particular concern because relevant animal influenza virus surveillance by the animal health sector is a cornerstone for zoonotic influenza risk analysis and human pandemic preparedness.

As AI is a global problem that poses an ongoing threat to animal and human health, OIE Members adopted Resolution No. XXVI at the 76th General Session (2008) to share AI viral material and information about AI viruses, through OFFLU, with the international scientific community.

Ms Brand concluded by reminding Member Country Delegates of this commitment and asked them, once again, to request the respective laboratories in their country to share avian influenza genetic sequence information with OFFLU in order to support global pandemic preparedness.

15. Other matters:

Rinderpest post-eradication activities

Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, briefly summarised the rinderpest post-eradication era since 2011 by pointing out positive progress in reducing the risk of re-emergence. In 2015-2016, Australia, Brazil and Switzerland destroyed their stored rinderpest virus-containing materials (RVCM); Botswana transferred all its RVCM to AU-PANVAC; and Japan transferred RVCM to the rinderpest holding facility in Tokyo and destroyed its RVCM holdings in other non-approved facilities.

While these efforts are to be commended, global freedom remains at risk while the virus continues to be stored in numerous locations. She highlighted another opportunity to reduce holdings through the “sequence and destroy project” with the United Kingdom’s Pirbright Institute and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). The aim of the project is to destroy all the RVCM after collecting its full-genome sequences. She encouraged Member Countries to take part in the project.

She reported that the FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee continued to meet to review applications and to advise on policies and future activities in the post-eradication era. In conclusion, she reminded Delegates to maintain their national contingency plans, carry out general surveillance, and continue their annual reporting, as stipulated in Chapter 8.15 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

Finally, she said that the 8th Conference of the African Union had decided that RVCM would be destroyed or sent to AU-PANVAC as the central location for RVCM sequestration. Later in 2015, AU-PANVAC was designated as a rinderpest holding facility by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates under categories A and B. She added that, as a holding facility, AU-PANVAC was instrumental in maintaining global freedom from rinderpest, which was why OIE Member Countries, partners and the African Union should support investment in its future.

Dr Daniel Bourzat, former Advisor to the Regional Representative in Africa, took the floor to announce his retirement. He thanked all Delegates and colleagues from Africa for their excellent collaboration during his carrier in Africa.

Dr Karim Tounkara, OIE Regional Representative for Africa, expressed his deepest gratitude for the great work accomplished by Dr Bourzat in the region.

The meeting officially ended at 6:20 p.m.

.../Appendix

**MEETING OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
Paris, Monday 23 May 2016**

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda (Dr Komla Batasse Batawui, Delegate of Togo and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa);
2. Report on OIE Council meetings (Dr Botlhe Michael Modisane, Delegate of South Africa and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates);
3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa (Dr Komla Batasse Batawui);
4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for Africa and the OIE Sub-Regional Representations for Southern Africa, North Africa, and Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa (Dr Karim Tounkara, OIE Regional Representative for Africa);
5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018 (Dr Moetapele Letshwenyo, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Southern Africa);
6. Selection of Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa (Dr Moetapele Letshwenyo);
7. Organisation of the 22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa to be held in Swakopmund, Namibia, in February 2017 (Dr Adrianatus Florentius Maseke, Delegate of Namibia);
8. Status of notifications by Members in Africa (Dr Lina Awada, Veterinary Epidemiologist, OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department);
9. State of play on the implementation of the recommendations of the 21st Conference of the OIE Regional Commission, held in Rabat, Morocco in February 2015 (Dr Rachid Bouguedour, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for North Africa);
10. Animal health programmes and activities related to the strengthening of Veterinary Services in Africa
 - Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS) (OIE Regional Representation for Africa)
 - Rabies (OIE Sub-Regional Representation for North Africa and OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Southern Africa)
 - Reinforcing Veterinary Governance in Africa (VET-GOV) programme (OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa);
11. Proposal for designation of a new OIE Collaborating Centre (Dr Mbargou Lo, Delegate of Senegal);
12. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head, OIE Scientific and Technical Department);
13. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE:
 - African Union - Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
 - West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)
14. OFFLU – The importance of contributing avian influenza genetic sequence data for pandemic preparedness (Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission, Scientific and Technical Department);
15. Other matters:

Rinderpest post-eradication activities (Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission, Scientific and Technical Department).

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS**

Paris, 23 May 2016

The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas met on 23 May 2016 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 102 participants, including Delegates and observers from 24 Members of the Commission and representatives from 10 international or regional organisations:

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Uruguay.

International/regional organisations: CARICOM⁴², CVP⁴³, FAO, ICFAW⁴⁴, IICA⁴⁵, IPC⁴⁶, OIRSA⁴⁷, PAHO-PANAFTOSA⁴⁸, World Bank, WTO

The meeting was chaired by Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, seconded by Dr Luis Osvaldo Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, in which it was proposed and agreed to include the discussion on regional consensus regarding interventions to be made at the General Session, was adopted unanimously as described in the Appendix.

2. Report on OIE Council meetings

Dr Joaquín Braulio Delgadillo Alvarez, Delegate of Mexico and Member of the OIE Council, began his presentation by providing details on Council members and the geographical rotation of the office of President of the OIE. He pointed out that it was customary for the President to have first held the office of Vice-President, which demanded a degree of continuity of the Delegate in question.

Dr Delgadillo Alvarez then informed Delegates that the OIE Council had met three times since the last General Session at which the Council was elected. The meetings were held in October 2015, February 2016 and May 2016 and looked at issues of strategic importance for

⁴² CARICOM: Caribbean Community

⁴³ CVP: Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone

⁴⁴ ICFAW: International Coalition for Animal Welfare

⁴⁵ IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

⁴⁶ IPC: International Poultry Council

⁴⁷ OIRSA: Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (Regional International Organization for Animal and Plant Health)

⁴⁸ PAHO: Pan American Health Organization - PANAFTOSA: Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center

the OIE, including major administrative matters, some of which would be presented to the 84th General Session in the form of draft resolutions. He added that the Council had continued to discuss implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020), particularly at the February 2016 meeting.

Dr Delgado Alvarez provided a brief review of the most important issues addressed at the Council meetings, as follows:

1. Detailed appraisal of the 83rd General Session with a view to suggesting improvements for the 84th General Session.
2. Considering the significantly improved recovery of arrears in recent years, the Council wished to review the procedure for implementing Article 5 of the General Rules of the OIE. The Council decided that Member Countries with arrears of five years or more would not be entitled to vote at the 2016 General Session and their Delegates would not receive the Delegate's allowance.
3. A specific point was emphasised with regard to the procedure for accessing dossiers from Member Countries seeking recognition for official status: namely that Member Countries applying for recognition of their status are required to respond, within 10 days, to requests from other Member Countries for information on the dossier within the 60-day commenting period. With respect to official recognition of disease status for bovine spongiform encephalopathy status, progress was described regarding the proposal for sampling in countries with small animal populations.
4. After receiving requests for new OIE Representations to be opened, the Council decided that it would first have to consider which criteria need to be taken into account when deciding whether to open a new OIE office, given that the Organisation is already experiencing financial difficulties with the operation of several Representations.
5. The Council endorsed the principle of a performance evaluation framework document for the OIE Specialist Commissions and suggested that indicators be used. All the Presidents and Members of the four Specialist Commissions have been informed of this new procedure. The Council examined the initial proposals for establishing an evaluation grid.
6. The Council also encouraged efforts to make the Spanish and French language versions of Specialist Commission reports available as quickly as possible to provide sufficient time for comments.
7. It discussed the issue of access to reports of the *ad hoc* groups and the possibility of making these reports available on the website.
8. The Council considered agreements with other international organisations. The Council approved the signing of agreements with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Indian Ocean Commission.
9. It discussed the platform provided in the Asia/Pacific region to facilitate the exchange of information among countries in the region. This facility does not exempt Member Countries from submitting their comments officially to the OIE. This initiative could be extended to the other regions if it proves successful following several months in operation.

At the Council meetings in February and May 2016, special attention was paid to administrative, budgetary and statutory issues, as well as to the preparation of the 84th General Session.

Finally, Dr Delgadillo Alvarez reported that with regard to preparing the 84th General Session, the Council considered proposals from the Director General on the organisation of the General Session and reviewed the Delegates' nominations for awards in the Gold and Merit categories. The Council also validated the working programme presented by the Director General, prior to its approval by the Assembly, as well as the new organisational chart, which will be finalised and implemented after the General Session.

It was stressed that the members of the Council and Bureau represent all OIE Member Countries in the Americas and, to this end, they reiterated their willingness to address any Member Country's concerns or needs.

3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, began his presentation by reminding participants of the composition of the Bureau elected at the previous General Session in May 2015.

He added that, over the reporting period, the Bureau had held two face-to-face meetings to discuss administrative and technical matters: one on 15 September 2015 in Panama and the other on 20 May 2016 in Paris.

Among the technical matters discussed by the Bureau, Dr Figueiredo Marques highlighted those relating to Regional Commission's priorities, including: the need to increase the participation of countries in the Americas in the OIE standard-setting process; the development of the mapping of the region's diagnostic laboratories; and strategic activities in the Americas relating to antimicrobial resistance. He said that, at its May meeting, the Bureau had also discussed the results of the OIE Knowledge Olympics and diagnostic techniques for glanders.

He added that, on 30 March 2016, the Bureau had held an online video meeting to discuss the agenda and organisation of upcoming meetings and the development of draft regulations for the Public-private Committees of the Americas, which had been sent to Member Countries for comment.

He reported that, as in previous years, on Sunday 22 May a meeting of Delegates of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas had been held to discuss standards under review and to adopt common positions for the region.

Dr Figueiredo Marques discussed the two recommendations of the 22nd Regional Conference (Mexico) and participation in preparing the upcoming 23rd Regional Conference to be held in Bolivia in November 2016.

4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas and the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Central America

Dr Luis O. Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, summarised the activities of the Regional Representation (Buenos Aires) and Sub-Regional Representation (Panama).

He began by introducing Dr Mirtha Giménez Pereira, who has taken up the post of Sub-Regional Representative for Central America, and Dr Helia Lemos da Silva, Brazil's new chargée de mission at the Regional Representation for the Americas.

He gave a brief account of joint activities with the Regional Commission and its Bureau, as well as participation in the implementation and monitoring of the document containing the priority activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.

He described actions to support OIE Headquarters and the Government of Bolivia in organising the next Regional Conference.

With regard to the participation of Member Countries in the OIE standard-setting and updating process, he explained that the WebEx platform for online meetings provided an opportunity for effective communication among Delegates and with Members of the OIE Specialist Commissions. However, he pointed out that participation remained very low and that, in many cases, the purpose of the meeting – for Delegates to discuss and reach agreement on chapters under review is missed. He added that Member Countries nor the OIE could afford to pay for face-to-face meetings and pointed out that the most critical period for preparing comments was from October to January.

Referring to the Laboratory Network of the Americas, he reminded Delegates that it had a platform for Member Countries to access information on the capabilities of national laboratories in terms of diagnostic capacity, vaccine and reagent production, research actions and inter-laboratory tests. Finally, he reminded Delegates of the need for country support in providing and updating information.

On the subject of antimicrobial resistance, he explained that the current framework included OIE and World Health Organization standards and guidelines and that both are linked under “One Health”. With regard to the Americas, he said that progress needed to be made on a regional strategy for implementing OIE standards in line with the outcomes of the Technical Item 2 on AMR to be presented the following day, and that it would also be necessary to coordinate actions with other regional and sub-regional organisations, including: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), Andean Community (CAN) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Dr Barcos said that efforts would be pursued to secure the membership of Caribbean countries that have not yet become OIE Members.

He gave a brief description of regional actions to support Member Countries with their foot and mouth disease (FMD) plans, as well as to support GF-TADs and diseases considered as a priority for the Americas.

He described the first OIE Knowledge Olympics, held in March 2016, and provided statistics on participation in the event.

With regard to communications from Regional and Sub-Regional Representations, he said that the website had been redesigned and that improvements would continue to be made to its content.

He concluded by reminding Delegates of the importance of teamwork with their National Focal Points, highlighting the support needed by Focal Points and the actions being taken by the OIE for their ongoing training.

In response to the comments received on existing constraints to the participation of Delegates and their National Focal Points in online meetings to discuss the OIE standard-setting and updating process, the Regional Representation was asked to ensure that invitations were sent at least two weeks in advance and that connections with each country were tested before holding online meetings.

5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (with a questionnaire to Members) for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session:

- Global warming and vector-borne arboviral diseases: keys to advancing surveillance

6. Selection of Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (without questionnaire) for inclusion in the agenda of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas:

- Highly pathogenic avian influenza - challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread

At the request of the Regional Commission, an additional technical item (without questionnaire) was proposed for inclusion:

- Depopulation and/or movement of animal populations during animal health emergencies and natural disasters. Experience in the region

The Bureau of the Regional Commission will take the necessary action to consider its inclusion in the Agenda of the Regional Conference.

7. Organisation of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to be held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 14 to 18 November 2016

Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado, Delegate of Bolivia, confirmed that his country was willing and honoured to host this important regional event and invited all Delegates to attend the conference.

He gave a brief account of the various arrangements Bolivia had made to start organising the conference.

He gave a brief description of the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra and the hotel that would host the conference, and reported on the visa requirements for entry into Bolivia. He also commented on the planned cultural visit to the archaeological site of Samaipata, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

He concluded by informing Delegates that the OIE would shortly be sending out invitations and relevant information, as well as launching a special website for the event.

8. Status of notifications by Members in the Americas

Dr Paula Cáceres Soto, Head of the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, gave a brief update on the status of notifications by Members in the Region as of 20 May 2016. She started by providing detailed regional information on compliance with reporting for 2015, separately for terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases. Then, she showed the percentage of Members with outstanding reports and encouraged them to submit the reports, not only for 2015 but also for previous years, emphasising the importance of timely disease reporting by countries/territories through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and of their providing other epidemiological information on disease prevention and control. Dr Cáceres Soto also gave an overview of the OIE-listed diseases and infections currently of major interest in the region. Dr Cáceres Soto concluded by

presenting the results of the online survey “Evaluation of WAHIS, 10 years after the launch”, which was designed to gather feedback from Veterinary Authorities on their level of satisfaction as WAHIS users, the challenges experienced during the notification process and suggestions for improvement. She highlighted the topics most frequently cited by respondents in the region as needing improvement.

9. Implementation of the OIE Strategic Plan in the Americas

Dr Martine Dubuc, Delegate of Canada and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, reported that the document containing the priority activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas had been based on the priorities and Work Plan defined by the Bureau of the Regional Commission and adopted by the Regional Commission in 2014.

She added that the Work Plan aims to establish the strategic guidelines that the Regional Commission should follow to strengthen relations with Member Countries in the region. She added that the Work Plan is aligned with the relevant objectives of the Sixth OIE Strategic Plan, following on from the previous Strategic Plan, and that it establishes a five-year implementation period, with annual reviews.

She explained that the priority areas defined by the Regional Commission are: promoting participation in the drafting of OIE standards; diagnostic laboratories; antimicrobial resistance; Regional Animal Welfare Strategy; and activities of National Focal Points. She said that, added to these five priority areas were activities to minimise the impact of unjustified restrictions on trade.

With regard to the priority area of promoting participation in the drafting of OIE standards, it was agreed that the organisation of online meetings was in need of improvement, including the preparation of detailed agendas and the distribution of documents for discussion. It was also decided to continue holding meetings prior to the General Session to coordinate regional positions, as a way of increasing the region’s influence.

With respect to laboratories, she said that there was a need to build their capacity in the region. She also explained the need to promote the OIE PVS Tool for laboratories and twinning projects, stressing that they needed to be prioritised. Finally, she listed the current status of laboratory twinning projects in the Americas.

On the issue of antimicrobial resistance, she said that coordinated action was needed in the region, taking into account the various international, regional and sub-regional organisations involved in the Americas.

With regard to animal welfare, she said that the steps set out in the Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for the Americas needed to be pursued and that the issue should continue to be considered as a priority.

Finally, with respect to National Focal Points, she stressed that, as interaction with their Delegates was essential to improving the OIE standard-setting process, she encouraged their involvement in the process.

10. Rinderpest post-eradication activities

Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, briefly summarised the rinderpest post-eradication era since 2011 by pointing out positive progress in reducing the risk of re-emergence. In 2015-2016, Australia, Brazil and Switzerland destroyed their stored rinderpest virus-containing materials (RVCM);

Botswana transferred all its RVCM to AU PANVAC; and Japan transferred RVCM to the rinderpest holding facility in Tokyo and destroyed its RVCM holdings in other non-approved facilities.

While these efforts are to be commended, global freedom remains at risk while the virus continues to be stored in numerous locations. She highlighted another opportunity to reduce holdings through the “sequence and destroy project” with the United Kingdom’s Pirbright Institute and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). The aim of the project is to destroy all the RVCM after collecting its full-genome sequences. She encouraged Member Countries to take part in the project.

Finally, she reported that the FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee continued to meet to review applications and to advise on policies and future activities in the post-eradication era. In conclusion, she reminded Delegates to maintain their national contingency plans, carry out general surveillance, and continue their annual reporting, as stipulated in Chapter 8.15 of the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

11. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session

Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head of the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began her presentation by saying that the 83rd World Assembly of OIE Delegates in 2015 had adopted Resolution No. 26 on combating antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals, following Resolution No. 25 on veterinary products adopted in 2009 and recommendations made at the first OIE Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals in 2013. One major point of Resolution 26 relates to the collection of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals with a view to establishing a global database. Major progress has been achieved in this area and OIE Member Countries have made considerable efforts. Indeed, a response rate of over 70% to the challenging questionnaire is seen as a real success. The results of the first phase of the project will be presented under Technical Item 2 on Tuesday.

She went on to explain that Resolution 26 also invited Member Countries to follow the guidance of the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR developed with the support of the OIE and in the spirit of the “One Health” approach. Since the Global Action Plan was adopted in May 2015, the fight against AMR under the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Collaboration has reached an unprecedented political level.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed out that the issue of AMR had been mentioned at the G7 Health Ministers’ meeting in Berlin (Germany) in October 2015, attended by Dr Monique Eloit, as well as at the recent G7 Agriculture Ministers’ meeting in Japan in April 2016. The next step envisioned is a resolution or high-level document on AMR endorsed by the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. To prepare this important event, in April 2016 the Tripartite hosted a High-Level Dialogue on AMR at the United Nations in New York to raise awareness of AMR and to invite participants to follow up with their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel concluded by saying that the OIE and its Member Countries had made major efforts in recent years to update and complete the standards and to adopt ambitious recommendations. Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed to the need to collectively communicate on these achievements and to seek solidarity to support Member Countries in progressing with

the implementation of standards, taking a step-wise approach. To this end, she noted that the OIE Council had proposed Technical Item 2 on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through a “One Health Approach”: Actions and OIE Strategy, which would address OIE achievements and projects and would provide the basis for the OIE strategy.

12. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE

Andean Community (CAN)

Dr Olga Lucía Díaz Martínez, Delegate accredited by Colombia, described the organisation’s main activities in the area of animal health on behalf of the President *pro tempore* of CAN.

She said that animal health activities for terrestrial animals were enshrined in Decision 515, updating the Andean Agricultural Health System and establishing the legal basis for adopting sanitary and phytosanitary measures applicable to trade. She explained the decisions affecting veterinary products, community risk analysis, animal quarantine and FMD prevention, control and eradication.

She also described the rules of the General Secretariat of the Andean Community (SGCAN) on sanitary measures for the trade or movement of animals and their products, disease reporting, health risk categories, animal quarantine and the Andean Subregional Programme for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease.

With regard to aquatic animals, she said that Decision 808 establishes measures for the prevention, surveillance, control and eradication of aquatic animal diseases, as does the Andean contingency plan against early mortality syndrome in farmed shrimp and the technical manual for its implementation.

She described coordination with other international organisations. She commented on a technical cooperation project with FAO that includes the Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center of the World Health Organization’s Pan American Health Organization (PAHO-PANAFTOSA) to strengthen epidemiological surveillance systems and emergency management for FMD, as well as the implementation of various activities based on the SGCAN/OIE agreement.

Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP)

Dr Luis Eduardo Echaniz, Technical Secretary of the CVP, said that, over the past 12 years, the CVP had consolidated its position as a reference organisation for animal health and food safety of animal products in the Southern Cone, in accordance with the mandate of the ministers of agriculture of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), who consider them to be “regional public goods”. He added that the CVP’s Strategic Plan 2016-2020, approved in 2015, establishes its annual operational programmes.

He highlighted the CVP’s main actions, including stage two of the MERCOSUR Foot and Mouth Disease-free Action Programme (PAMA), aimed at securing sustainability through the joint eradication of FMD by bringing together the activities of all member countries under the Hemispheric Plan for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (PHEFA).

He added that the CVP’s Strategic Plan includes the work of its *ad hoc* groups, such as the *ad hoc* group on food safety, which took part in the workshop on strategies for Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) risk mitigation, and the *ad hoc* group on poultry health, which analysed the risk of avian influenza reintroduction and plans for preventing it in the regional strategy for the prevention of avian influenza, which was updated in 2014.

He said that the CVP had held a workshop on responsiveness to animal health emergencies, under the CAS/CVP-IICA agreement, to build the capacity of Veterinary Services to plan and manage their response to animal health emergencies.

Finally he reported on the CVP's work on communication and knowledge management, in addition to promoting the use of videoconferencing. He recommended visiting the CVP website, which contains tools to facilitate regional work.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Dr Julio Pinto, on behalf of the FAO, began his presentation by saying that an estimated 85% of South America's cattle population had now been recognised as FMD-free and that acknowledged progress on animal health had been made in the region, where there are now disease-free territories.

He went on to stress the need for emergency management and response strategies to consolidate the abovementioned progress. He said that, to this end, FAO had developed an online course on the management of health risks and biological invasions for food security and nutrition. He added that technical capacity is being built in Andean countries (FMD).

He also reported that, under the Continental Plan for the Eradication of Classical Swine Fever from the Americas, a joint mission by FAO/OIE/OIRSA and the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) had led to the establishment of priorities for supporting progress and achieving goals in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. South-South cooperation is being implemented for this purpose.

He said that, while canine rabies was in the process of being eliminated from Latin America, wildlife rabies had become an emerging problem that threatened public health and food security in rural areas. In response, he said that FAO was strengthening disease prevention systems through community participation, under the "One Health" approach.

On the subject of antimicrobial resistance, he explained that work had started in the region with a draft regional agenda, based on the global FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, which establishes four focus areas of work: awareness, evidence, governance and practices. The draft agenda will be shared and refined with countries in the region at various regional and sub-regional events.

He concluded by saying that major challenges still lay ahead in improving systems for the epidemiological surveillance of animal diseases in a context of climate change and the integrated management of animal, ecosystem and public health under the "One Health" approach.

In answer to a query concerning the institution's approach to antimicrobial resistance, Dr Pinto said that FAO's goal was to work in coordination with all international and regional organisations and Member Countries.

International Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA)

Dr Luis Alberto Espinoza Rodezno, OIRSA Regional Director for Animal Health, detailed the main actions undertaken by OIRSA in 2015 to strengthen Veterinary Services.

The actions included the provision of support to Panama's laboratory for the diagnosis of vesicular disease (LADIVES), in conjunction with an agreement between OIRSA and the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), strengthening of the epidemiological surveillance programme, training on FMD and screwworm, and updating of emergency manuals.

He detailed OIRSA actions to prevent bovine paralytic rabies in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, jointly with FAO, and support for Guatemala and Honduras with diagnostic kits and supplies for the surveillance of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

He discussed the approval of the regulations and procedures manual for the control and eradication of brucellosis, tuberculosis and Newcastle disease (Standards and Trade Development Facility project grant STDF/PG/358).

He described the project for the prevention, control and eradication of classical swine fever, including the provision of diagnostic kits, and the support given to Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

He gave details of training in the diagnosis of shrimp diseases and the strengthening of epidemiological surveillance of aquatic animals, in cooperation with FAO. He added that OIRSA has provided support and monitoring for small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) surveillance in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Belize, and capacity-building for farmers in El Salvador.

He also reported that OIRSA had provided training on veterinary drug residues and withdrawal periods, based on good practice manuals, and had helped to organise, in collaboration with the OIE, and finance the 21st meeting of the Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET).

He concluded by describing the technical and financial support given to Belize for the eradication of low pathogenic avian influenza H5N2.

13. Other matters:

Discussions and proposals regarding annual face-to-face meetings on the OIE standard-setting process

Dr Martine Dubuc described the current situation regarding the participation of Member Countries in the OIE standard-setting and updating process. In this connection, she explained the participation statistics of the Americas region compared with other regions. She cited the success achieved in the Africa region, where face-to-face and small-group meetings held since 2013 have increased the number of OIE Members from that region submitting comments.

She pointed out that face-to-face meetings had been a decisive factor in enabling Member Countries to agree on regional positions on OIE standards, making it important for the Americas region to be able to hold face-to-face meetings.

She added that, as the main constraint to holding face-to-face meetings had been lack of financial resources, it was necessary to evaluate potential funding sources.

In this regard, the Delegates agreed that a face-to-face meeting should be held annually, ideally in June or July, to establish a common understanding on the role of countries in the process of adopting OIE standards, and that regional consensus positions should be reached.

It was agreed to hold preliminary online meetings with experts, at which priority items for inclusion in the agendas would be selected. To this end, the Delegates of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama and the United States of America offered to be involved.

It was noted that, as consensus needed to be reached, the support of experts on the issues under discussion was required to provide OIE Member Countries in the Americas with the necessary training.

Discussion on regional consensus regarding interventions to be made at the General Session

The Delegates of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas reviewed the various items proposed for adoption at the 84th General Session. This involved the selection of items relevant to the region, such as the reports of the OIE Specialist Commissions and Brazil's proposal for an OIE Reference Laboratory. This selection included Members speaking on behalf of the Americas.

The meeting officially ended at 6:30 p.m.

.../Appendix

**MEETING OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS**

Paris, Monday 23 May 2016

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda (Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas);
2. Report on OIE Council meetings (Dr Joaquín Braulio Delgadillo Álvarez, Delegate of Mexico and Member of the OIE Council);
3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas (Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques);
4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas and the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Central America (Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas);
5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018 (Dr Joaquín Braulio Delgadillo Álvarez);
6. Selection of Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas (Dr Mark Trotman, Delegate of Barbados and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas);
7. Organisation of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to be held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 14 to 18 November 2016 (Dr Javier Ernesto Suárez Hurtado, Delegate of Bolivia);
8. Status of notifications by Members in the Americas (Dr Paula Cáceres, Head, OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department);
9. Implementation of the OIE Strategic Plan in the Americas (Dr Martine Dubuc, Delegate of Canada and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas);
10. Rinderpest post-eradication activities (Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission, Scientific and Technical Department);
11. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head, OIE Scientific and Technical Department);
12. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE:
 - Andean Community (CAN)
 - Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP)
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
 - International Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA)
13. Other matters:
 - Discussions and proposals regarding annual face to face meetings on OIE standard setting process (Dr Martine Dubuc);
 - Discussion on regional consensus regarding interventions to be made at the General Session.

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA, THE FAR EAST AND OCEANIA**

Paris, 23 May 2016

The OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania met on 23 May 2016 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 113 participants, including Delegates and observers from 24 Members of the Commission and 2 observer countries/territories and representatives from 6 international or regional organisations:

Members of the Commission: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China (People's Rep. of), Chinese Taipei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Korea (Dem. People's Rep. of), Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

Observer countries/territories: France, Hong Kong SAR.

International/regional organisations: *Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières*, FAO, ICFAW⁴⁹, Pacific Community, WAP⁵⁰, World Bank.

Dr Sen Sovann, Delegate of Cambodia and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, on behalf of Dr Zhang Zhongqiu, Delegate of the People's Republic of China and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, welcomed the Delegates, observers and representatives of regional and international organisations and introduced the Members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, described in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted with slight modifications.

2. Report on OIE Council meetings

Dr Mark Schipp, Delegate of Australia and Vice-President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, began his presentation by providing details on Council members and the geographical rotation of the office of President of the OIE. He pointed out that it was customary for the President to have first held the office of Vice-President, which demanded a degree of continuity of the Delegate in question.

Dr Schipp then informed Delegates that the OIE Council had met three times since the last General Session at which the Council was elected. The meetings were held in October 2015, February 2016 and May 2016 and looked at issues of strategic importance for the OIE, including major administrative matters, some of which would be presented to the 84th

⁴⁹ ICFAW : International Coalition for Animal Welfare

⁵⁰ WAP : World Animal Protection

General Session in the form of draft resolutions. He added that the Council had continued to discuss implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020), particularly at the February 2016 meeting.

Dr Schipp provided a brief review of the most important issues addressed at the Council meetings, as follows:

1. Detailed appraisal of the 83rd General Session with a view to suggesting improvements for the 84th General Session.
2. Considering the significantly improved recovery of arrears in recent years, the Council wished to review the procedure for implementing Article 5 of the General Rules of the OIE. The Council decided that Member Countries with arrears of five years or more would not be entitled to vote at the 2016 General Session and their Delegates would not receive the Delegate's allowance.
3. A specific point was emphasised with regard to the procedure for accessing dossiers from Member Countries seeking recognition for official status: namely that Member Countries applying for recognition of their status are required to respond, within 10 days, to requests from other Member Countries for information on the dossier within the 60-day commenting period.
4. After receiving requests for new OIE Representations to be opened, the Council decided that it would first have to consider which criteria need to be taken into account when deciding whether to open a new OIE office, given that the Organisation is already experiencing financial difficulties with the operation of several Representations.
5. The Council endorsed the principle of a performance evaluation framework document for the OIE Specialist Commissions and suggested that indicators be used. All the Presidents and Members of the four Specialist Commissions have been informed of this new procedure. The Council examined the initial proposals for establishing an evaluation grid.
6. The Council also encouraged efforts to make the Spanish and French language versions of Specialist Commission reports available as quickly as possible to provide sufficient time for comments.
7. It discussed the issue of access to reports of the *ad hoc* groups and the possibility of making these reports available on the website.
8. The Council considered agreements with other international organisations. The Council approved the signing of agreements with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Indian Ocean Commission.
9. It discussed the platform provided in the Asia/Pacific region to facilitate the exchange of information among countries in the region. This facility does not exempt Member Countries from submitting their comments officially to the OIE. This initiative could be extended to the other regions if it proves successful following several months in operation.

At the Council meetings in February and May 2016, special attention was paid to administrative, budgetary and statutory issues, as well as to the preparation of the 84th General Session.

Finally, Dr Schipp reported that with regard to preparing the 84th General Session, the Council considered proposals from the Director General on the organisation of the General Session and reviewed the Delegates' nominations for awards in the Gold and Merit

categories. The Council also validated the working programme presented by the Director General, prior to its approval by the Assembly, as well as the new organisational chart, which will be finalised and implemented after the General Session.

3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania

Dr Keshav Prasad Premy, Delegate of Nepal and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, gave a presentation on the activities of the Regional Commission on behalf of Dr Zhang Zhongqiu, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, who had been unable to attend the General Session.

Dr Premy reminded Delegates of the composition of the Regional Core Group established pursuant to the Regional Work Plan Framework, namely the members of the Bureau of the Regional Commission and members of the OIE Council from the region, elected at the 83rd OIE General Session in 2015. He added that *ad hoc* meetings had been held to discuss administrative and technical matters and follow up the outcomes of the 29th Regional Conference in Mongolia, while remaining in contact via email to enhance communication and coordination between the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations and Members in the Region.

Dr Premy touched upon several important global and regional meetings subsequent to the 83rd General Session, in which Members of the Region had participated. Dr Premy explained that a one-day seminar for national Delegates on the development of public-private partnerships to support Veterinary Services, followed by the 29th Regional Conference, had emphasised the need to strengthen collaboration between official Veterinary Services and private veterinarians, veterinary technicians and community animal health workers in the region. He then reported on key global initiatives discussed at the GF-TADs 8th Global Steering Committee Meeting in Rome (Italy) in October 2015, including the standard operating procedure for GF-TADs labelling, the GF-TADs website and pilot reporting of key performance indicators.

Dr Premy explained the Regional Work Plan Framework (2016-2020), which the Regional Commission had adopted at the 29th Conference of the Regional Commission in September 2015, to remind and encourage Members to take steps to put the Work Plan into action in the region. Dr Premy explained that the main changes in the new Work Plan had been in response to Members' comments, including: the addition of a progress review mechanism; more emphasis on promoting scientific excellence using the region's Reference Centres; and stronger engagement in aquatic animal health by specific programmes and better coordination between Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services, while ensuring continued alignment with current needs and priorities in the region and the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020). He reiterated the importance of the Vision and Regional Objectives of the Work Plan and introduced a number of specific activities to be developed and/or implemented to address current needs and priorities in the region. He said that the Work Plan would be reviewed at the 30th Regional Conference in September 2017.

Dr Premy also pointed to improvements in communication among regional Members. As Delegates had already been given access to the Regional Delegates' site, it had been launched within the regional website in October 2015. He encouraged Delegates to use it to improve communication and coordination among Members in the region.

He concluded by reminding the Regional Commission of the 4th OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education to be held in Bangkok (Thailand) on 22-24 June 2016. He encouraged Delegates to participate in this important event.

4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific

Dr Hirofumi Kugita, OIE Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, began his presentation by informing the Commission of recent staff changes at the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (RR-AP).

He then touched on the RR-AP's secretariat role for the Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, the activities of which had just been reported by the Vice-President of the Commission. He reiterated the importance of steadily implementing the Regional Work Plan Framework (2016-2020) as part of the closer relationship between the Regional Commission and Regional/Sub-regional Representations. He also reminded members that the OIE Delegates' Secured Access System had been launched on the OIE regional website in October 2015, and encouraged Delegates to use the system more actively to get involved in the OIE standard-setting process.

Dr Kugita reported the following progress achieved under technical programmes at RR-AP.

- As permanent secretariat of the Regional Steering Committee of GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific, since March 2015, RR-AP has co-organised with FAO a series of sub-regional meetings of GF-TADs for each sub-region, namely: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Pacific Community and East Asia. At these meetings, specific challenges in each sub-region and possible solutions were discussed among sub-regional members and partners, which will be brought into the forthcoming Regional Steering Committee meeting of GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific in July 2016.
- In connection with the OIE/Japan Trust Fund (JTF) Project on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Control in Asia, the 4th Coordination Committee Meeting and 2nd FMD Scientific Meeting were held in June 2015 in Tokyo (Japan). The meetings agreed to continue strengthening collaboration and coordination among members in East Asia to control FMD and to expand their activities to cover other priority transboundary animal diseases (TADs). As a follow-up, the Coordination Meeting for TADs Control in East Asia was held in March 2016 in Shanghai (People's Republic of China). The meeting recommended a possible mechanism and activities to be put in place in the sub-region, which will be further discussed with a view to future endorsement by the sub-regional Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs). As a contribution to the FMD vaccination campaign under the South-East Asia and China Foot and Mouth Disease (SEACFMD) campaign, RR-AP supported the donation of FMD vaccine to Laos by the Japanese government.
- Another OIE/JTF project is to support activities for controlling zoonoses in Asia under the "One Health" concept. The 6th Asia-Pacific Workshop on Multi-sectoral Collaboration for the Prevention and Control of Zoonoses was held in October 2015 in Sapporo (Japan) under the regional tripartite collaboration between FAO, OIE and the World Health Organization (WHO). RR-AP also held further relevant meetings, including: Regional Workshop on Prevention and Control of Neglected Zoonoses in Asia, co-organised with the FAO Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA) and the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), in July 2015 in Obihiro (Japan); Rabies Workshop for SAARC Countries, co-organised with the World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO), in August 2015 in Colombo (Sri Lanka); and Follow-up Workshop on Relevant International Standards for Dog Rabies, co-organised with the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia (SRR-SEA), in May 2016 in Bangkok (Thailand).
- As aquatic animal health activities are another important component of the JTF Project, a Regional Workshop on Safe International Trade in Aquatic Animals and Aquatic Animal Products was held in July 2015 in Nagaoka (Japan). RR-AP continues to collaborate with the Network of Aquaculture Centre in Asia-Pacific (NACA) and agreed

to improve work on the Quarterly Aquatic Animal Disease (QAAD) Report by streamlining the work done separately by OIE and NACA in the past and by publishing the QAAD Report online for faster and easier access, while discontinuing the printed version.

- The Regional Animal Welfare Strategy Advisory Group (RAWS AG) was established in accordance with the terms of reference and *modus operandi* agreed by the Regional Commission in September 2015. RAWS AG members have been appointed by the OIE Director General and are about to start work.

Dr Kugita went on to report on capacity-building activities at RR-AP. They include seminars for OIE National Focal Points, held with the support of the Republic of Korea, on three topics: animal disease notification, in February 2016 in Chiba (Japan); veterinary products, in March 2016 in Tokyo (Japan); and veterinary laboratories, in April 2016 in Jeju (Republic of Korea). A training seminar on the PVS Tool for East Asia was also held in April 2016 in Seoul (Republic of Korea), with the support of the Republic of Korea.

Dr Kugita concluded by informing the Commission of planned activities for the rest of 2016, as follows:

- Regional Steering Committee meeting of GF-TADs, to be held back-to-back with the East Asia CVOs meeting, in July 2016 in Tokyo (Japan);
- Regional workshop on avian influenza in endemic countries, in August 2016;
- Regional workshop on developing a regional strategy for swine disease control;
- Regional meeting on PPR control and eradication in Asia.

5. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia, including the outcome of the 22nd Meeting of the OIE Sub-Commission for Foot and Mouth Disease in South-East Asia and China, held from 8 to 11 March 2016 in Chiang Rai, Thailand

Dr Ronello Abila, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for South-East Asia (SRR SEA), began his presentation by saying that the OIE SRR-SEA continued to play a major role in sub-regional coordination of animal health related activities, including for emerging infectious disease, in South-East Asia, which were issues requiring consistent and complementary approaches because of the transboundary nature of these diseases. The OIE SRR-SEA also plays an important role in providing policy, programme and strategic planning advice and support to Members. He reported that the OIE SRR-SEA manages the Stop Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses (STANDZ) Initiative, which gathers under a single umbrella programme all existing programmes funded by the Australian Government, namely: the SEACFMD Campaign; the Strengthening Initiative for Veterinary Services (STRIVES); and a One Health/zoonoses programme focusing on rabies. STANDZ was given a no-cost extension until December 2017. A new FMD project funded by the New Zealand Government was signed in September 2015 and field activities commenced in November 2015. The New Zealand-funded project will support the existing SEACFMD Campaign.

Dr Abila also provided details on the entire SRR-SEA team led by the Sub-Regional Representative.

He explained that the SEACFMD Campaign remained the SRR-SEA flagship programme. He provided details on key achievements in 2015, including: endorsement of the third edition of the SEACFMD 2020 Roadmap, extending from SEACFMD Phase 5 (2016 to 2020); completion of a regional animal movement study for Mekong countries; delivery of 600,000 FMD vaccine doses through the OIE vaccine bank; post-vaccination monitoring

studies; organisation of various sub-regional meetings; and provision of training on animal disease outbreak investigation and management. He also reported that the New Zealand-funded FMD project had launched its first activity with a mission of experts from New Zealand's Massey University and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to the Department of Livestock and Fisheries in Vientiane (Laos) and a field visit to Champasak.

He also gave details of key activities conducted between January and April 2016, including: launch of SEACFMD Phase 5 at the 22nd Meeting of the OIE Sub-Commission for Foot and Mouth Disease Control in South-East Asia and China; publication of the third edition of the SEACFMD 2020 Roadmap; and endorsement by the Sub-Commission of Mongolia's application for SEACFMD membership. The New Zealand-funded FMD project that commenced in late 2015 has gathered pace in 2016. The project will build on and extend gains made during the Australian Government-funded STANDZ initiative in Laos and Myanmar.

Dr Abila explained that the One Health/rabies programme provided support to One Health coordination in South-East Asia, promoted the use and application of international standards and guidelines, supported rabies research and studies, and advanced rabies control and prevention in the sub-region. He went on to mention key achievements in 2015, including: a pilot project for rabies control through mass dog vaccination; epidemiological investigations; public awareness campaigns; political engagement to secure more resources for the project; and promotion of the One Health coordination mechanism using rabies as a model. Referring to key activities in 2016, Dr Abila cited the follow-up regional workshop on Members' progress in complying with OIE rabies standards, the end of mass dog vaccination in pilot areas, and documentation on key project achievements and best practices.

On the subject of STRIVES, Dr Abila reported that the SRR-SEA continued to support the strengthening of Veterinary Services in South-East Asian countries through the PVS Pathway. Based on the findings of PVS Evaluation and Gap Analysis missions reports, STRIVES has been able to provide specific technical assistance and financial support and to hold workshops and seminars to help address report recommendations. Key achievements in 2015 include: a sub-regional workshop on the PVS Pathway in Bali (Indonesia); several information seminars for public-sector and practising veterinarians in South-East Asia; training of laboratory staff on occupational health and safety; an information seminar for veterinary education establishments; and the fifth OIE sub-regional workshop for veterinary statutory bodies, held in Pattaya (Thailand) on 9-10 November 2015. For 2016, Dr Abila mentioned a training course on the application of OIE standards and guidelines for animal disease surveillance, prevention and control. The SRR also helped to prepare the fourth OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education: implementing OIE guidelines to ensure the excellence of the veterinary profession, in Bangkok (Thailand) on 22-24 June 2016.

Dr Abila then reported on the 22nd Meeting of the OIE Sub-Commission for Foot and Mouth Disease Control in South-East Asia and China, which had been held in Chiang Rai (Thailand) on 8-11 March 2016. The meeting was attended by around 90 participants, including representatives from SEACFMD Member Countries, key partners and OIE Reference Laboratories, as well as OIE staff from Headquarters, the Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific, the Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia and the Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana.

He said that participants had been updated on the current achievements of the SEACFMD Campaign and the launch of Phase 5 of the campaign, as well as on the latest global and regional FMD situation. The recent cross-regional spread of FMD viruses was highlighted

and Member Countries were requested to continue to collect and submit field samples to support early detection of exotic viruses and timely implementation of risk-based control measures.

Dr Abila then provided details of the meeting's key recommendations, which would guide the work of the SEACFMD Campaign over the coming year.

6. Discussion on the forward work programmes of the Council, Specialist Commissions and Regional and Sub-Regional Representations

Dr Matthew Stone, Delegate of New Zealand and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, conducted a discussion on the reports from the Council and Regional and Sub-Regional Representations, in order to confirm endorsement of the intended strategic direction by the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania.

The work plans of the Specialist Commissions published in the February 2016 meeting reports were also presented in order to identify items of interest to Regional Commission Members.

The Regional Commission encouraged items to be identified where experts from the region could make a valuable contribution to *ad hoc* groups, so that Members could provide details of relevant experts to the OIE Director General for consideration.

The Members of the Commission welcomed the Director General's decision to make the process for selecting experts participating in OIE Specialist Commissions and *Ad Hoc* groups more transparent and diverse. The Commission requested that representation from the Region be considered in the future and encouraged nominations to be submitted by all Member Countries in the Region. The Delegate of Iran, requested that the OIE ensure a more balanced distribution of initiatives and activities across the Region. Recognising that these programmes and meetings are linked to donor support, the Commission advocated for funding support covering the overall Region, particularly with regards to the implementation of the Regional Work Plan Framework (2016-2020).

Concerning the OIE Laboratory Twinning Projects in the Region, it was underscored that the corresponding OIE Regional and Sub-Regional offices can support Member Countries in the development of project proposals.

The Delegate of India indicated interest to obtain, if available, information regarding genetic selection for resistance to infectious diseases in cattle.

7. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018

The following technical item (including a questionnaire to Members) was proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session:

- Improving general surveillance through One Health and interdisciplinary approaches

8. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 30th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania

The following technical item (including a questionnaire to Members) was adopted for the 30th Regional Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania:

- How to implement farm biosecurity: the role of government and private sector

9. Confirmation of the venue of the 30th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania to be held in November 2017

The Delegate of Malaysia confirmed his country's offer to host the 30th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania. The Conference will be held in Putra Jaya (Malaysia) in November 2017.

10. Status of notifications by Members in Asia, the Far East and Oceania

Dr Paolo Tizzani, Veterinary Epidemiologist at the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, gave a brief update on the status of notifications by Members in the Region as of 20 May 2016. He started by providing detailed regional information on compliance with reporting for 2015, separately for terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases. Then, he showed the percentage of Members with outstanding reports and encouraged them to submit the reports, not only for 2015 but also for previous years, emphasising the importance of timely disease reporting by countries/territories through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and of their providing other epidemiological information on disease prevention and control. Dr Tizzani also gave an overview of the OIE-listed diseases and infections currently of major interest in the region. Dr Tizzani concluded by presenting the results of the online survey "Evaluation of WAHIS, 10 years after the launch", which was designed to gather feedback from Veterinary Authorities on their level of satisfaction as WAHIS users, the challenges experienced during the notification process and suggestions for improvement. He highlighted the topics most frequently cited by respondents in the region as needing improvement.

The Commission discussed mechanisms to improve the epidemiological data in notifications provided to WAHIS. Potential inclusion of data from published articles related to reported outbreaks was identified as a possible mean to enrich the quality of information found in WAHIS. The Commission was also informed that the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) and OIE are now working together towards possible inter-operability between the NACA reporting system and WAHIS in the future to improve aquatic disease reporting.

Remarks regarding the impact of transparent reporting to trade and unjustified barriers were also raised.

11. Outcomes of the 29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 14 to 18 September 2015

Dr Sen Sovann, Delegate of Cambodia and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, described the outcomes of the 29th Conference of the Regional Commission, which had been attended by a total of 92 participants, including OIE Delegates and/or nominees of 26 Members, 1 observer country and senior officers from 7 international and regional organisations.

Dr Sen reported that the Regional Commission had agreed to the establishment of a Regional Animal Welfare Strategy Advisory Group (RAWS AG), based on the proposed terms of reference and *modus operandi* which had been agreed in principle and further subject to a round of consultation by email. It had also been agreed that, following a call for expressions of interest in the office of RAWS AG member or Chair, the Bureau of the Regional Commission would nominate RAWS AG members prior to submitting their nomination to the OIE Director General for approval.

Dr Sen listed the main recommendations developed following the discussions of each of the two technical items.

Technical Item I (with questionnaire), entitled “*The role of Veterinary Authority in managing emerging aquatic animal diseases: what are the factors needed for success?*”, had led to recommendations for Member Countries to: consider any need for improved cooperation between their Veterinary Authority and other authorities responsible for aquatic animal health capabilities; ensure important factors for successful response to emerging diseases, such as early detection, early reporting, early response, and public-private partnerships and industry cooperation; and request PVS Evaluation missions of their Aquatic Animal Health Services. Technical Item I had also led to recommendations for the OIE to work with Member Countries to facilitate improved coordination of regional action in response to serious emerging diseases of aquatic animals; and to continue to support Member Countries in the region through the OIE PVS Pathway for Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services.

Technical Item II (without questionnaire), entitled “*How can we progress the cooperation between animal health sector and public health sector?*”, had led to recommendations for Member Countries to: advocate for a high level of commitment by national Veterinary Services and national Public Health Services; consider a clear chain of command and coordination mechanisms; be involved in the implementation of OIE standards and World Health Organization International Health Regulations (WHO IHR) through the use of the OIE PVS Pathway and the WHO IHR Monitoring Framework (WHO IHRMF); and identify practical activities for joint national and regional roadmaps to strengthen collaboration and coordination between both sectors. Technical Item II had also led to recommendations for the OIE to: advocate at the highest level strong collaboration between veterinary authorities, public health authorities and other relevant stakeholders, in collaboration with WHO; and support its Member Countries in the use of the OIE PVS Pathway and the WHO IHRMF.

Regional Commission Members were reminded that the adopted recommendations would be presented for endorsement by the World Assembly of Delegates at its seventh plenary session on 26 May 2016, making their implementation binding on the entire OIE World Assembly of Delegates.

12. Discussion on the proposed amendments to the OIE Codes and other key issues to be taken into account during the 84th General Session

Dr Matthew Stone began a discussion on the chapters proposed for adoption and inclusion in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health* and *Aquatic Animal Health Codes*. He invited Members of the Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania to share proposed interventions, particularly if they intended not to support adoption or adoption following amendment.

Proposed interventions with wide support from Members of the Regional Commission were identified, and consideration was given to making an intervention on behalf of all Members of the Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania.

The Regional Commission agreed that Japan intervene on behalf of the Region during the Fourth Plenary Session on the Code Commission to encourage that the Members of the Region engage during the review of Chapter 15.1 African swine fever of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* in order to address the risks to the Region.

A discussion between Thailand and the President of the Aquatic Animals Commission took place concerning the proposed revision on Chapter 5.1 General obligations related to certification of the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*.

A general comment was made by China (People's Rep. of) regarding the continuing challenge in maintaining the balance between facilitating global trade to support economies, while protecting and promoting the safety of both animals and national consumers.

13. Rinderpest post-eradication activities

Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, briefly summarised the rinderpest post-eradication era since 2011 by pointing out positive progress in reducing the risk of re-emergence. In 2015-2016, Australia, Brazil and Switzerland destroyed their stored rinderpest virus-containing materials (RVCM); Botswana transferred all its RVCM to AU PANVAC; and Japan transferred RVCM to the rinderpest holding facility in Tokyo and destroyed its RVCM holdings in other non-approved facilities.

While these efforts are to be commended, global freedom remains at risk while the virus continues to be stored in numerous locations. She highlighted another opportunity to reduce holdings through the “sequence and destroy project” with the United Kingdom's Pirbright Institute and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). The aim of the project is to destroy all the RVCM after collecting its full-genome sequences. She encouraged Member Countries to take part in the project.

Finally, she reported that the FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee continued to meet to review applications and to advise on policies and future activities in the post-eradication era. In conclusion, she reminded Delegates to maintain their national contingency plans, carry out general surveillance, and continue their annual reporting, as stipulated in Chapter 8.15 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

14. OFFLU – The importance of contributing avian influenza genetic sequence data for pandemic preparedness

Dr Gounalan Pavade, Chargé de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began his presentation by saying that the OIE/FAO network of expertise on animal influenza (OFFLU) had been established jointly by the two organisations to support and coordinate global efforts to prevent, detect and control important influenza strains in animals. One of the network's core objectives is to share avian influenza (AI) genetic sequence data with WHO in order to assist with the selection of the most appropriate circulating viruses for seasonal human vaccines, which can include animal viruses posing a potential pandemic threat.

He explained that, since 2010, OFFLU had contributed more than 1,000 genetic sequences of zoonotic AI viruses isolated from animal samples by OIE/FAO reference centres and by national and regional laboratories, which are shared at twice-yearly WHO vaccine composition meetings to identify relevant virus strains for use in human vaccines. OFFLU would like to thank all the laboratories involved and Member Countries for this generous contribution.

Unfortunately, the amount of genetic and antigenic data submitted by OFFLU to WHO vaccine composition meetings has decreased significantly in recent years in spite of ongoing and new AI outbreaks in various countries. This is of particular concern because relevant animal influenza virus surveillance by the animal health sector is a cornerstone for zoonotic influenza risk analysis and human pandemic preparedness.

As AI is a global problem that poses an on-going threat to animal and human health, OIE Members adopted Resolution No. XXVI at the 76th General Session (2008) to share AI viral material and information about AI viruses, through OFFLU, with the international scientific community.

Dr Pavade concluded by reminding Member Country Delegates of this commitment and asked them, once again, to request the respective laboratories in their country to share avian influenza genetic sequence information with OFFLU in order to support global pandemic preparedness.

Further to a request from Indonesia for support concerning expertise on bioinformatics in Influenza virus monitoring, the OIE confirmed that specific discussions can be held to this effect.

Hong Kong SAR informed the Commission that for the past 20 years they have shared information on HPAI sequence isolates with WHO, a practice that is in line with the One Health approach advocated by the OIE.

15. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session

Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head of the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began her presentation by saying that the 83rd World Assembly of OIE Delegates in 2015 had adopted Resolution No. 26 on combating antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals, following Resolution No. 25 on veterinary products adopted in 2009 and recommendations made at the first OIE Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals in 2013. One major point of Resolution 26 relates to the collection of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals with a view to establishing a global database. Major progress has been achieved in this area and OIE Member Countries have made considerable efforts. Indeed, a response rate of over 70% to the challenging questionnaire is seen as a real success. The results of the first phase of the project will be presented under Technical Item 2 on Tuesday.

She went on to explain that Resolution 26 also invited Member Countries to follow the guidance of the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR developed with the support of the OIE and in the spirit of the “One Health” approach. Since the Global Action Plan was adopted in May 2015, the fight against AMR under the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Collaboration has reached an unprecedented political level.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed out that the issue of AMR had been mentioned at the G7 Health Ministers’ meeting in Berlin (Germany) in October 2015, attended by Dr Monique Eloit, as well as at the recent G7 Agriculture Ministers’ meeting in Japan in April 2016. The next step envisioned is a resolution or high-level document on AMR endorsed by the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. To prepare this important event, in April 2016 the Tripartite hosted a High-Level Dialogue on AMR at the United Nations in New York to raise awareness of AMR and to invite participants to follow up with their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel concluded by saying that the OIE and its Member Countries had made major efforts in recent years to update and complete the standards and to adopt ambitious recommendations. Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed to the need to collectively communicate on these achievements and to seek solidarity to support Member Countries in progressing with

the implementation of standards, taking a step-wise approach. To this end, she noted that the OIE Council had proposed Technical Item 2 on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through a “One Health Approach”: Actions and OIE Strategy, which would address OIE achievements and projects and would provide the basis for the OIE strategy.

The discussion on AMR highlighted the need for all sectors to work together on common objectives and to jointly address this important issue. Adopting a step-wise approach was identified as being the key for achieving ambitious objectives relating to antimicrobial resistance. Among others, the specificities of OIE Members will be considered during the OIE-USDA Scientific Symposium on Alternatives to Antibiotics which will take place at OIE Headquarters (Paris) in December 2016.

16. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The FAO Representative began her presentation by saying that the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP) comprised 44 member countries. She noted that it was the most diverse region in the world, harbouring over half the world’s population but still home to 62% of the world’s undernourished people.

She added that FAO’s livestock programme within the organisation’s new Strategic Framework was aimed at maximising the contribution of livestock to: achieving food security; alleviating poverty; enhancing resilience and sustainability; and reducing health risks to humans and animals. FAO provided technical assistance to countries in the region on animal health and production, including the development of transboundary animal, zoonotic disease and food safety programmes, improving value chains, establishing cross-border dialogue and helping countries to prepare for emerging pandemic threats, including antimicrobial resistance. She noted that FAO had strengthened partnerships with OIE and WHO, ASEAN, SAARC and the Pacific Community and had tapped into a number of animal health platforms, including APHCA, the FAO Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES), the FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), the OIE/FAO Network of Expertise on Animal Influenza (OFFLU) and GF-TADs.

She concluded by saying that, at the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, held in March 2016 in Malaysia, member countries had requested FAO-RAP to assist them in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For 2016, FAO will place special emphasis on climate change adaptation and mitigation and on operationalising One Health in the region.

Pacific Community

Mr Ilagi Puana presented the updates, challenges and ongoing work of the former Secretariat of the Pacific Community (now called the Pacific Community) in the Pacific Island Region, which is composed of 22 countries and territories located in the huge Pacific Ocean with about 9 million people.

The GF-TADs Pacific Regional workshop was held in Fiji in 2015, with 8 countries attending. Prior to this workshop, Animal Welfare and OIE WAHIS Reporting training workshop were also held. Paraveterinary training in Vanuatu and Palau commenced in February and April 2016, respectively, and will be completed in August and September, 2016 respectively. Training in and testing of animal disease emergency response plan for Samoa was conducted in 2015 and for Vanuatu in April, 2016. Poultry disease surveys were conducted in Samoa and Kiribati in 2014/2015 and FMD, bovine brucellosis and leptospirosis surveillance in cattle were conducted in Vanuatu in late 2015. Laboratory results confirmed Vanuatu remains free from FMD, while results for brucellosis and leptospirosis are still pending. Animal biosecurity training was conducted for 5 northern

Pacific island countries and territories in March, 2016. Suspected HPAI disease incidents were reported and investigated in Yap, Marshall Islands and Palau in the northern Pacific island region in 2015 and 2016. Laboratory results ruled out HPAI in all of these incidents.

Challenges continue to remain in the Pacific Island Region. It is faced with chronic shortages of qualified veterinary specialist and the vast travelling distances between countries and lack of funding support make it very challenging for an effective regional response capacity by Pacific Community Veterinary Unit. Countries with potentially high Biosecurity risks includes Palau, Guam, French Territories, PNG and Fiji based on direct trade and air and shipping links with countries outside of the Pacific region and illegal fishing and logging by foreign countries.

The Pacific Community continues to place emphasis on establishing paraveterinary capacity in selected Island countries with the limited resources that it has. Since its inception in 2003, a total of 473 people have been trained in 16 Pacific Island countries and further 31 people are currently in training in 2 countries.

Further clarification was sought by Fiji regarding policies and governance on diagnostic testing of samples by the Pacific Community.

17. Other Matters:

Regional rabies response plan

Australia put forward a proposal to develop a regional strategy for the control and eradication of dog-mediated rabies. The Global Framework to eliminate dog-mediated rabies by 2030 was developed in December 2015 at the OIE/WHO global conference on the elimination of dog-mediated rabies. An effective global strategy will require a series of effective regional strategies. Therefore, Australia proposed that the Regional Representation could lead the development of a strategy for the region. There are activities related to rabies being undertaken by several countries and sub-regional groups but an overall regional plan has not been articulated. This work is in line with the Regional Work Plan Framework 2016-2020 and also the OIE 6th Strategic Plan. The OIE 6th Strategic Plan identifies, as a particular issue to be addressed, the leadership and coordination of international and regional programmes for the global eradication and control of specific disease of economic and social importance including rabies.

The meeting officially ended at 6:40 p.m.

.../Appendix

**MEETING OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA, THE FAR EAST AND OCEANIA
Paris, Monday 23 May 2016**

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda (Dr Sen Sovann, Delegate of Cambodia and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania);
2. Report on OIE Council meetings (Dr Mark Schipp, Delegate of Australia and Vice-president of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates);
3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania (Dr Keshav Prasad Premy, Delegate of Nepal and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, on behalf of Dr Zhang Zhongqiu, Delegate of P.R. China and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania);
4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (Dr Hirofumi Kugita, OIE Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific);
5. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia, including the outcome of the 22nd Meeting of the OIE Sub-Commission for Foot and Mouth Disease in South-East Asia and China, held from 8 to 11 March 2016 in Chiang Rai, Thailand (Dr Ronello Abila, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for South-East Asia);
6. Discussion on the forward work programmes of the Council, Specialist Commissions and Regional and Sub-Regional Representations (Dr Matthew Stone, Delegate of New Zealand and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania);
7. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018 (Dr Toshiro Kawashima, Delegate of Japan and Member of the OIE Council);
8. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 30th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania (Dr Keshav Prasad Premy);
9. Confirmation of the venue of the 30th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania to be held in November 2017 (Dr Hirofumi Kugita);
10. Status of notifications by Members in Asia, the Far East and Oceania (Dr Paolo Tizzani, Veterinary Epidemiologist, OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department);
11. Outcomes of the 29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 14 to 18 September 2015 (Dr Sen Sovann);
12. Discussion on the proposed amendments to the OIE Codes and other key issues to be taken into account during the 84th General Session (Dr Matthew Stone);
13. Rinderpest post-eradication activities (Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission, OIE Scientific and Technical Department);
14. OFFLU – The importance of contributing avian influenza genetic sequence data for pandemic preparedness (Dr Gounalan Pavade, Chargé de mission, Scientific and Technical Department);
15. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head, OIE Scientific and Technical Department);
16. Presentations from Organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE:
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
 - Pacific Community
17. Other matters:
 - Regional rabies response plan.

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Paris, 23 May 2016

The OIE Regional Commission for Europe met on 23 May 2016 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 141 participants, including Delegates and observers from 45 Members of the Commission and representatives from 14 international or regional organisations:

Members of the Commission: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan.

International/regional organisations: Council of the European Union, EuFMD, European Commission, EEAS⁵¹, EEC⁵², FAO, FESASS⁵³, FEI/IHSC⁵⁴, FVE⁵⁵, IPC, ISO⁵⁶, IZSAM⁵⁷, IZSLER⁵⁸, RSPCA⁵⁹.

The meeting was co-chaired by both Dr Budimir Plavšić (Serbia), Secretary General of the Commission, and Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and Past President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates.

They both welcomed the Delegates, observers and representatives of regional and international organisations. Dr Budimir Plavšić explained that three members of the Bureau of the OIE regional Commission for Europe changed their position over the past year and that election had to occur again in 2016.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, described in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted.

⁵¹ EEAS: European External Action Service

⁵² EEC: Eurasian Economic Commission

⁵³ FESASS: European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security

⁵⁴ FEI/IHSC: Federation Equestre Internationale/International Horse Sport Confederation

⁵⁵ FVE: Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

⁵⁶ ISO : International Organization for Standardization

⁵⁷ IZSAM: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise

⁵⁸ IZSLER: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna

⁵⁹ RSPCA: Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

2. Report on OIE Council meetings

Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and Past President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, began her presentation by providing details on Council members and the geographical rotation of the office of President of the OIE. She pointed out that it was customary for the President to have first held the office of Vice-President, which demanded a degree of continuity of the Delegate in question.

Dr Schwabenbauer then informed Delegates that the OIE Council had met three times since the last General Session at which the Council was elected. The meetings were held in October 2015, February 2016 and May 2016 and looked at issues of strategic importance for the OIE, including major administrative matters, some of which would be presented to the 84th General Session in the form of draft resolutions. She added that the Council had continued to discuss implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020), particularly at the February 2016 meeting.

Dr Schwabenbauer provided a brief review of the most important issues addressed at the Council meetings, as follows:

1. Detailed appraisal of the 83rd General Session with a view to suggesting improvements for the 84th General Session.
2. Considering the significantly improved recovery of arrears in recent years, the Council wished to review the procedure for implementing Article 5 of the General Rules of the OIE. The Council decided that Member Countries with arrears of five years or more would not be entitled to vote at the 2016 General Session and their Delegates would not receive the Delegate's allowance.
3. A specific point was emphasised with regard to the procedure for accessing dossiers from Member Countries seeking recognition for official status: namely that Member Countries applying for recognition of their status are required to respond, within 10 days, to requests from other Member Countries for information on the dossier within the 60-day commenting period.
4. After receiving requests for new OIE Representations to be opened, the Council decided that it would first have to consider which criteria need to be taken into account when deciding whether to open a new OIE office, given that the Organisation is already experiencing financial difficulties with the operation of several Representations.
5. The Council endorsed the principle of a performance evaluation framework document for the OIE Specialist Commissions and suggested that indicators be used. All the Presidents and Members of the four Specialist Commissions have been informed of this new procedure. The Council examined the initial proposals for establishing an evaluation grid.
6. The Council also encouraged efforts to make the Spanish and French language versions of Specialist Commission reports available as quickly as possible to provide sufficient time for comments.
7. It discussed the issue of access to reports of the *ad hoc* groups and the possibility of making these reports available on the website.
8. The Council considered agreements with other international organisations. The Council approved the signing of agreements with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Indian Ocean Commission.

9. It discussed the platform provided in the Asia/Pacific region to facilitate the exchange of information among countries in the region. This facility does not exempt Member Countries from submitting their comments officially to the OIE. This initiative could be extended to the other regions if it proves successful following several months in operation.

At the Council meetings in February and May 2016, special attention was paid to administrative, budgetary and statutory issues, as well as to the preparation of the 84th General Session.

Dr Schwabenbauer reported that with regard to preparing the 84th General Session, the Council considered proposals from the Director General on the organisation of the General Session and reviewed the Delegates' nominations for awards in the Gold and Merit categories. The Council also validated the working programme presented by the Director General, prior to its approval by the Assembly, as well as the new organisational chart, which will be finalised and implemented after the General Session. She said that, specifically for the Europe region, the Council approved to close the Regional Representation for Eastern Europe in Sofia by summer 2016 and to reinforce the Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels.

Dr Schwabenbauer also emphasized the need for greater collaboration between the OIE Council and the Regional Commissions and OIE Regional Offices. Finally, she encouraged all countries of Europe to increase the category of their statutory contributions to the OIE, in addition to possibly make voluntary contributions through the well-established OIE World Animal Health and Welfare Fund.

3. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow, and the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana

Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, and Dr Mereke Taitubayev, Head of the OIE Sub-Regional Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Coordination Unit Office in Astana, presented the work programme of all the OIE Representations in Europe.

With regard to the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow (RR Moscow), information was provided on meetings and visits, including high-level officials' meetings.

Details were also provided regarding meetings already held by, or to be held by RR Moscow over the coming months, including National Focal Point seminars and meetings and capacity building activities relating to the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe, as well as OIE 'train the trainers' workshops on animal welfare during transport and slaughter.

RR Moscow is the region's contact point for providing support on using the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and related database interface. RR Moscow is also involved in diplomatic dialogue with the Russian authorities.

Details were also provided regarding additional RR-Moscow activities planned for 2016.

As regards the Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels (SRR-Brussels), Dr Leboucq provided details on the staff situation: the office is staffed by one officer, Dr N. Leboucq, the OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels. However, SRR-Brussels does host Mr O. Stucke, whom the World Health Organization (WHO) has made available to the OIE on a part-time basis to work on matters relating to global risk communication.

Details were also provided on the SRR-Brussels work programme for 2016, which follows on from previous programmes and is in line with the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020). The work programme focuses on the following main areas of intervention.

- Participation in OIE regional activities in Europe, in close collaboration with the OIE Offices in Moscow and Astana: in its capacity as secretariat for the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe, SRR-Brussels has continued to implement the platform's 2014-2016 Action Plan, organising a series of activities to build the capacity of Veterinary Services (see specific summary on the platform's activities). It was agreed that, in light of the results already achieved by the platform in terms of regional dialogue and greater awareness of the subject in the region, it would be desirable for the platform to have a second action plan. SRR-Brussels also participates at a technical level in OIE regional seminars for National Focal Points and OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway activities.
- Interfacing with institutions/organisations with headquarters in Brussels, through work meetings primarily on European (but sometimes also global) issues: during the first half of 2016, SRR-Brussels has taken part in a number of coordination meetings with its partners, including the European Commission, World Customs Organization (WCO), Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (FESASS). In addition, SRR-Brussels actively contributes to practical implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the OIE and the WCO, with the preparation of a first joint workshop on implementing the new World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement.
- Implementation of the activity programme of the Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) for Europe, in particular with regard to African swine fever (ASF): in its capacity as the secretariat for the Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever in the Baltic and Eastern European region (SGE), SRR-Brussels helped to organise expert missions to the seven countries involved in the initiative, as well as the feedback meeting (Moscow, March 2016). Based on the results, a capacity-building programme for countries, with particular regard to ASF surveillance in domestic pigs and wild boar, is being prepared under the auspices of GF-TADs, mainly using European Commission tools, especially the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme.
- Contribution to the work of the Global GF-TADs Working Groups on FMD and peste des petits ruminants (PPR): within this framework, and following the adoption of the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) in April 2015, SRR-Brussels participated in the meetings to launch regional 'PPR roadmaps' for East Africa, the Middle East, West Eurasia and South Asia. SRR-Brussels took part in the third FMD Roadmap Meeting for the Middle East and the seventh FMD Roadmap Meeting for Western Eurasia.

Information was then provided on the following activities planned by SRR-Brussels in the second half of 2016: (a) technical support as and when required for the forthcoming seminars for National Focal Points in Europe (for wildlife, in Belarus in July 2016; others to be confirmed); (b) continuation of the activities of the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe, especially the organisation of a second workshop on stray dog population management, for Balkan countries (Albania, June 2016); (c) preparation of the first workshop on long-distance transport of animals for slaughter (second half of 2016, to be confirmed); and (d) follow-up of the awareness campaign on stray dogs in Balkan

countries, focusing on responsible dog ownership to reduce the number of strays; (e) collaboration in the organisation of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Portugal, September 2016). Details of the aforementioned activities are published on the OIE regional website, managed by SRR-Brussels.

Dr Taitubayev explained that the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana had organised and conducted several meetings, including: Regional Workshop on the OIE procedure for the official recognition of Member Countries' disease status and for the endorsement of official national control programmes for FMD (March 2015 Astana, Kazakhstan); sixth Regional FMD Roadmap Meeting for West Eurasia (April 2015, Almaty, Kazakhstan); closing meeting for the OIE laboratory twinning project on brucellosis between Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise 'G. Caporale' (IZSAM) in Italy and the National Veterinary Reference Centre (NVRC) in Kazakhstan (December 2015, Astana, Kazakhstan); first Regional PPR Roadmap Meeting for Central Asia (February 2016 Almaty, Kazakhstan); seventh Regional FMD Roadmap Meeting for West Eurasia (April 2016, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan); and commemoration of World Veterinary Day at S. Seifullin Kazakh Agro-Technical University in Astana (Kazakhstan).

Details were also provided on meetings attended by Sub-Regional Coordination Unit representatives, as well as those they are planning to attend up to the end of 2016.

4. Rinderpest post-eradication activities

Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, briefly summarised the rinderpest post-eradication era since 2011 by pointing out positive progress in reducing the risk of re-emergence. In 2015-2016, Australia, Brazil and Switzerland destroyed their stored rinderpest virus-containing materials (RVCM); Botswana transferred all its RVCM to AU PANVAC; and Japan transferred RVCM to the rinderpest holding facility in Tokyo and destroyed its RVCM holdings in other non-approved facilities.

While these efforts are to be commended, global freedom remains at risk while the virus continues to be stored in numerous locations. She highlighted another opportunity to reduce holdings through the “sequence and destroy project” with the United Kingdom's Pirbright Institute and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). The aim of the project is to destroy all the RVCM after collecting its full-genome sequences. She encouraged Member Countries to take part in the project.

Finally, she reported that the FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee continued to meet to review applications and to advise on policies and future activities in the post-eradication era. In conclusion, she reminded Delegates to maintain their national contingency plans, carry out general surveillance, and continue their annual reporting, as stipulated in Chapter 8.15 of the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (including a questionnaire to Members) to be included in the agenda of the 86th General Session:

- Implementation of OIE standards by OIE Member Countries – state of play and specific capacity building needs

6. Selection of Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe to be held in Portugal:

- Lumpy Skin Disease: current situation in Europe and neighbouring regions and necessary control measures to halt the spread in South-East Europe

7. Organisation of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, to be held in Lisbon, Portugal from 19 to 23 September 2016

Professor Álvaro Mendonça, Delegate of Portugal, confirmed that his country was willing and honoured to hold this important regional event and invited all Delegates to attend the conference.

He gave a brief account of the various arrangements that Portugal had made to start organising the conference. Prof. Mendonça provided general information about hotel accommodation and transport, giving assurances that full details would be sent to participants in a timely manner.

He explained that, as September was the peak season for events in Lisbon, no rooms were available at the conference venue before 19 September. Conference participants will be able to reserve rooms only starting from 19 September, the same day on which the conference starts. Consequently and to allow plenty of time on the day of arrival, the opening ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. Registration will open at 2 p.m. Portugal will provide a welcome dinner that evening. He provided other hotel options identified by Portugal in the vicinity of the venue (some being a few subway stops away from the venue, others within walking distance).

To conclude, Prof. Mendonça emphasised the importance of Delegates and other participants to proceed with hotel reservations without delay and, in any case, by no later than 15 July 2016. After that date, the special rate negotiated by the country would no longer be available and availability of rooms could not be guaranteed.

8. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session

Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head of the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began her presentation by saying that the 83rd World Assembly of OIE Delegates in 2015 had adopted Resolution No. 26 on combating antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals, following Resolution No. 25 on veterinary products adopted in 2009 and recommendations made at the first OIE Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals in 2013. One major point of Resolution 26 relates to the collection of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals with a view to establishing a global database. Major progress has been achieved in this area and OIE Member Countries have made considerable efforts. Indeed, a response rate of over 70% to the challenging questionnaire is seen as a real success. The results of the first phase of the project will be presented under Technical Item 2 on Tuesday.

She went on to explain that Resolution 26 also invited Member Countries to follow the guidance of the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR developed with the support of the OIE and in the spirit of the “One Health” approach. Since the Global Action Plan was adopted in May 2015, the fight against AMR under the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Collaboration has reached an unprecedented political level.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed out that the issue of AMR had been mentioned at the G7 Health Ministers' meeting in Berlin (Germany) in October 2015, attended by Dr Monique Eloit, as well as at the recent G7 Agriculture Ministers' meeting in Japan in April 2016. The next step envisioned is a resolution or high-level document on AMR endorsed by the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. To prepare this important event, in April 2016 the Tripartite hosted a High-Level Dialogue on AMR at the United Nations in New York to raise awareness of AMR and to invite participants to follow up with their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel concluded by saying that the OIE and its Member Countries had made major efforts in recent years to update and complete the standards and to adopt ambitious recommendations. Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed to the need to collectively communicate on these achievements and to seek solidarity to support Member Countries in progressing with the implementation of standards, taking a step-wise approach. To this end, she noted that the OIE Council had proposed Technical Item 2 on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through a "One Health Approach": Actions and OIE Strategy, which would address OIE achievements and projects and would provide the basis for the OIE strategy.

9. Status of notifications by Members in Europe

Dr Marija Popovic, Chargée de mission at the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, gave a brief update on the status of notifications by Members in the Region as of 20 May 2016. She started by providing detailed regional information on compliance with reporting for 2015, separately for terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases. Then, she showed the percentage of Members with outstanding reports and encouraged them to submit the reports, not only for 2015 but also for previous years, emphasising the importance of timely disease reporting by countries/territories through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and of their providing other epidemiological information on disease prevention and control. Dr Popovic also gave an overview of the OIE-listed diseases and infections currently of major interest in the region. Dr Popovic concluded by presenting the results of the online survey "Evaluation of WAHIS, 10 years after the launch", which was designed to gather feedback from Veterinary Authorities on their level of satisfaction as WAHIS users, the challenges experienced during the notification process and suggestions for improvement. She highlighted the topics most frequently cited by respondents in the region as needing improvement.

The Delegate of Greece requested that 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' be used instead of 'Macedonia'. A representative of the Russian Delegation proposed to change the OIE Code chapter on notification of diseases to include the obligation for endemic countries to report any outbreak within 20 to 50 km from a border using an immediate notification procedure, in order to alert the neighbouring countries on the need to take immediate preventive measures. Dr Marija Popovic indicated that this request will be possibly considered by the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department and the relevant Specialist Commissions.

10. Peste des petits ruminants situation in Georgia

Dr Mikheil Sokhadze, Delegate of Georgia, gave a brief presentation of the PPR situation in his country. He began by saying that high mortality in young sheep (1-2 months of age) had been reported on 14 January 2016 on a farm near Georgia's capital city, Tbilisi. The National Food Agency's Veterinary Department took immediate action to investigate the outbreak and test the samples locally. Bluetongue was diagnosed by the Ministry of Agriculture laboratory. Quarantine measures, as well as stamping-out of diseased animals

and disinfection/disinsection measures, were conducted in the infected farm. A circular letter was sent to all regional veterinarians concerning suspicious disease in small ruminants. Immediate notification was sent to OIE through WAHIS regarding the suspected first occurrence of a listed disease in the country (notification dated 23 January 2016).

He explained that samples were submitted to the Pirbright Institute in the United Kingdom for confirmation of the preliminary results. As the samples tested negative for bluetongue virus (notification dated 29 January 2016), they were re-tested for PPR, after which PPR virus was confirmed in the samples (notification dated 8 February 2016). Following further investigation, the preliminary misdiagnosis was confirmed as having been caused by a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) failure at the local laboratory.

On 3 February 2016, Georgia's Chief Veterinary Officer sent an official letter to FAO requesting assistance. In response to the official request, the OIE/FAO Crisis Management Centre-Animal Health (CMC-AH) fielded a rapid deployment team to Tbilisi on 7 February 2016. The overall objective of the mission was to investigate the country's first ever PPR outbreak and support the government in its response. The CMC-AH team visited several farms and a livestock market close to the initial farm. While signs related to PPR were recognised on two of the four farms visited, no specific signs were noticed in the livestock market. Samples for laboratory diagnosis were collected from live and dead animals on all four farms. The outbreak investigation concluded that PPR infection on the farms found to be infected was new because only young animals were sick, having no maternal antibody protection.

In accordance with the CMC-AH team recommendation, the state Veterinary Service planned and implemented the following actions: establishment of a PPR national strategic plan and a PPR task force led by the CVO; a pre-vaccination survey to evaluate the geographical distribution of current PPR infection; risk-based vaccination of susceptible animals, with 1,300,000 small ruminants vaccinated to date; necessary diagnostic kits were purchased for the laboratory.

Dr Sokhadze concluded by saying that, since then, no clinical cases of PPR had been reported in Georgia. Thanks to the rapid response of the Veterinary Service and swift support from CMC-AH mission recommendations, coupled with mass vaccination of susceptible animals, Georgia succeeded in halting and controlling the disease.

The Delegate of United Kingdom, Dr Nigel Gibbens, asked clarification about the stamping out modalities put in place and the duration of the vaccination campaign. Dr Sokhadze indicated that modified stamping out was applied targeting lambs with clinical signs only and all susceptible animals were vaccinated within two weeks, given the risks associated with nomadic system prevailing in Georgia. Vaccination campaign was carried out by the Veterinary Services in collaboration with other relevant authorities.

11. Latest developments regarding the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare in Europe

Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, began her presentation by saying that, in the second half of 2015 and in 2016, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, which provides the secretariat for the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare in Europe, had continued to implement the platform's three-year action plan, launched in 2013. This included preparing and organising the following important activities relating to the platform's three priority areas: stray dog population control; transport of animals; and slaughter of animals.

- (a) Second train-the-trainers workshop on transport and slaughter for seven Russian-speaking countries (Russia, March-April 2016). An assessment of the first train-the-trainers workshop (Georgia, first half of 2015) showed that most of the participating countries had already increased the number of training sessions at national level for

veterinary inspectors working in local abattoirs and some veterinary education establishments have incorporated this training into the curriculum of veterinary students.

- (b) First regional workshop on national strategy for stray dog population management in West Eurasia (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, October 2015) and launch of a self-assessment system for these countries to determine their situation in 2016 using the tool developed by the OIE and its Collaborating Centre in Teramo (Italy); the countries took note of Chapter 7.7 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* on stray dog population control and undertook to comply with it fully by 2030.
- (c) Preparation of modules on long-distance transport of animals for slaughter and poultry, to be used in train-the-trainers workshops in late 2016 and in 2017.
- (d) Development of the platform's new website.
- (e) Fifth meeting of the platform's Steering Group (SG5) (Dublin, Ireland, November 2015) and its sixth meeting (SG6) (Teramo, Italy, April 2016), which served to validate the six-monthly programmes already completed (second half of 2015 and first half of 2016) or yet to come (second half of 2016).

Dr Leboucq then reported that, in the second half of 2016, it was planned to hold a second workshop on stray dog management in the Balkans (Albania, June 2016). She noted that the preparation of national roadmaps, based on the results of the self-assessments made in the first half of 2015, would be an important topic during the workshop. The campaign to raise awareness about stray dogs in the Balkans, with a focus on responsible dog ownership and reducing the number of stray dogs, which was launched in May 2016, will also inform discussions during the workshop and will be evaluated in March 2017. There are also plans to organise the first train-the-trainers workshop on long-distance transport of animals for slaughter and poultry, based on the training modules developed in the first half of 2016.

She added that, at the SG5 meeting the members of the platform's Steering Committee agreed on the need to develop a second action plan for the platform, which would cover the period 2017-2019 and continue along the same lines as the first. Depending on the outcome of forthcoming discussions, the welfare of working horses and the welfare of animals in disasters could be added to the list of topics covered by the platform. Dr Leboucq pointed out that OIE Delegates in Europe would be closely involved in the preparation and validation of the platform's second action plan, due to be validated at the 85th OIE General Session in May 2017. An external evaluation – to take place at the end of 2016 – will endorse the platform's first action plan and make useful recommendations for preparing the second action plan. The platform's initial financial partner, the European Union, has already indicated that it will provide financial support for the second action plan, while a growing number of donors (France, Switzerland, Germany, World Animal Protection, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) are also supporting the platform's activities.

Dr Leboucq concluded by saying that the platform's new website was being finalised and would contain comprehensive information about the platform, as well as serving as an online forum for regional discussion and dialogue among all European countries.

The Chair of the meeting, Dr Budimir Plavšić, congratulated the OIE for all the work conducted on animal welfare in the region.

12. Latest developments regarding the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region

Prof. Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow, began his presentation by explaining that ASF was one of the most important pig diseases spreading across Eastern Europe.

Prof. Lukauskas presented an overview of ASF spread from Africa in 2007 to the Caucasus and Eastern Europe.

He said that ASF had been introduced into Georgia in 2007. The disease has spread widely to Armenia, Azerbaijan and throughout the Russian Federation, from where it has continued its spread westwards, with the first outbreak reported in Ukraine in 2012, Belarus in 2013, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland in 2014, and Estonia in 2015.

He stressed the potential risk of the ASF virus entering the European Union.

Prof. Lukauskas went on to provide a number of risk analyses that had been made on potential ASF introduction into the European Union and Asia from Africa and Eastern Europe by several routes of entry.

He explained the main characteristics of the transmission routes of ASF, saying that ASF virus was transmitted mainly through direct contact (between an infected animal and a healthy animal), indirect contact through fomites (such as contaminated products, people or trucks) or biological vectors (soft ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*).

Prof. Lukauskas commented on the risk factors for early detection of ASF in Eastern European countries namely; inadequate control programmes, late detection, inadequate surveillance programmes, and weak Veterinary Services.

He pointed out that, in 2014, the OIE, in collaboration with the European Union and the FAO, had established a Standing Group of Experts (SGE) for ASF for which a programme had been approved.

Prof. Lukauskas provided details on the outcomes of the three SGE meetings held since 2014.

Prof. Lukauskas reported that the first SGE meeting (SGE1), held in Minsk (Belarus) in December 2014, had stressed the need for strong cooperation among hunters, environmental authorities and Veterinary Services in order to manage wild boars more effectively. Hunting should be conducted in a manner that avoids movement of wild boars. Management of wild boars should be clearly defined in accordance with the ecological, environmental and sociocultural situation in the region. The SGE reiterated that trust and cooperation could only be built by providing full access to the relevant information.

He added that biosecurity was crucial to prevent the entry and spread of ASF into commercial and backyard pig farms. The prerequisite for achieving this is for Veterinary Services to provide basic information to pig farmers by way of appropriate communication campaigns. Backyard farms practising low biosecurity currently play an important role in the spread of ASF. Given the economic importance of backyard farms in certain areas, the control and biosecurity measures to be implemented in backyard production systems need to be carefully evaluated.

Prof. Lukauskas then reported on the second SGE meeting (SGE2), held in Tallinn (Estonia) in February 2015, which established an expert team and scheduled a set of visits to the various affected countries, as follows: Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Russia, Latvia, Ukraine, Estonia.

Prof. Lukauskas then provided details on the conclusions of SGE3, held in Moscow (Russia) in March 2016, as follows:

- Surveillance and monitoring activities should be based on the biological characteristics of ASF;
- Surveillance in domestic pigs should be focused on ASF early detection ;
- For wild boar, passive surveillance should be enhanced in both infected and risk areas while maintaining the current level of active surveillance; and
- The proportionality and effectiveness of the measures conducted within endangered zones should be re-evaluated taking into consideration the distinctive epidemiological features of ASF, as well as risk patterns.

Prof. Lukauskas concluded by commenting on the resolutions of the meeting between the OIE and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) in 2014. He stressed that the key to ASF control was to raise awareness and educate all sectors involved (including farmers, veterinarians, government officials and hunters) to ensure that they understand the alarming socio-economic impact of the disease in endemic areas, prioritise action and grasp the importance of controlling and eradicating this disease.

Dr Leboucq, in her capacity as Secretary of the ASF SGE initiative, recalled that the fourth meeting of the ASF SGE (SGE4) will be held the next day taking advantage of the presence of the Delegates/CVOs of all seven involved countries as well as of Romania and Moldova, also invited to join the initiative.

13. Implementation of the PVS Pathway in Central Asia

Dr Mereke Taitubayev, Head of the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana, began his presentation by saying that Central Asian countries had used the PVS Tool largely to improve the compliance of their Veterinary Services with OIE international standards. As early as 2007, the first PVS Evaluation missions were requested and conducted in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Tajikistan followed soon after, in 2009, and latterly Turkmenistan, in 2013.

He said that a brief analysis of use made of the PVS Tool showed clearly that two of the countries evaluated appear to be fully aware of the importance and usefulness of the PVS Pathway. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have requested additional missions to their initial PVS Evaluation mission: a PVS Gap Analysis mission to get an indicative costing of resources required to implement the country priorities defined; PVS Follow-up missions to assess progress made; and veterinary legislation support to strengthen their legislative framework. Based on the recommendations of their initial PVS Evaluation, they have also requested twinning projects to improve the quality of their Veterinary Services.

A laboratory Twinning project on brucellosis between Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise 'G. Caporale' (IZSAM) in Teramo (Italy) and the National Veterinary Reference Centre in Astana (NVRC) (Kazakhstan) ended in December 2015 with a regional meeting to share the lessons learned with other countries. The goal of the laboratory in Kazakhstan, following this Twinning, is to apply to become an OIE Reference Laboratory for brucellosis.

A Twinning project on veterinary education is under way between the National Veterinary School of Toulouse (France) and the Kazakh National Agrarian University of Almaty, working with a consortium of Kazakh universities. After a slow start, the Twinning project has gathered pace, with exchanges of teachers and students taking place this year.

Kyrgyzstan has also requested a Twinning project to improve the implementation of its recently established veterinary statutory body: a first step that had stemmed from the proposal for Kyrgyzstan to play an active participation in the global conference on veterinary education, held in Iguazu (Brazil) in December 2013.

Dr Taitubayev concluded by saying that regular country PVS Evaluation Follow-up missions were useful for assessing, monitoring and supporting progress made – something that Central Asian countries have certainly taken on board. He acknowledged that the main sticking point for them now – funding for future progress – would require a clear regional cooperation programme to be developed to encourage investors and secure the effective support of their own ministries of finance.

14. Election of the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and Past President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, informed participants that, as the Delegates of Estonia, Spain and Azerbaijan had changed, leaving vacant the positions of President and the two Vice-Presidents of the Regional Commission, a partial election needed to be held.

The Commission unanimously nominated the Delegates of Latvia, Serbia, Austria and Belarus for the offices of President, first Vice-President, second Vice-President and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, respectively.

The membership of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe is as follows:

President:	Dr Maris Balodis (Latvia)
Vice-President:	Dr Budimir Plavšić (Serbia)
Vice-President:	Dr Ulrich Herzog (Austria)
Secretary General:	Dr Aliaksandr Subotsin (Belarus)

This decision will be submitted for endorsement by vote of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates during the course of the week.

15. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE

European Commission

Dr Bernard Van Goethem highlighted the activities of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety in the area of animal health and welfare in Europe, including: transboundary animal disease control programmes in the European Union and neighbouring countries; BTSF activities; the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe; and other OIE capacity-building activities financed by the European Commission. He also gave an update on the state of play of European Union animal health law.

Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC)

The Representative of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) began his presentation by saying that the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) had come into force on 1 January 2015. He explained that the EEU was an international organisation for regional economic integration with international legal personality. The EEU Member States are: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. The EEC is a permanent supranational regulatory body of the EEU. EEC decisions are binding within the territory of EEU Member States.

He explained that one of the EEC's main tasks in relation to sanitary and phytosanitary measures were to develop (in accordance with the EEU Treaty) EEU regulatory legal acts to maintain the epizootic and veterinary-sanitary well-being of the EEU territory.

He concluded by saying that cooperation between the EEC and OIE was currently based on a cooperation agreement concluded by the EEC and OIE on 10 January 2014.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Dr Andriy Rozstalnyy, Animal Health and Production Officer at the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, began his presentation by saying that FAO provided assistance to countries in Europe and Central Asia on sustainable livestock production, veterinary public health, food safety and animal genetic resource conservation. He added that, in particular, assistance was provided on: development policies and strategies for livestock production and the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases (ASF, FMD, PPR, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia), including zoonoses such as brucellosis and rabies; emergency response to emerging diseases such as lumpy skin disease and PPR; and providing solutions to challenges faced by Veterinary Services and livestock producers. FAO also assesses livestock and the implementation of programmes for improving livestock breeding, such as enhancing honey bee productivity and assisting rural populations, especially women, in generating income through capacity-building in honey production. FAO fosters public-private dialogue and partnership in such areas as: awareness of ASF risk prevention and control; and support for the establishment and strengthening of professional and community-based organisations, such as associations of veterinary practitioners, farmers and milk producers. Raising awareness of antimicrobial resistance is another important area of FAO's work in the region.

16. Other matters:

The Delegate of Ukraine, Dr A. Verzhychkovskiy, requested that the proposal of the State Scientific Research Control Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Feed Additives in Lviv, Ukraine, to become an OIE Collaborating Center on bee health and bee product food safety be included as part of the agenda of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Lisbon, September 2016). The Chair answered that this request will be possibly considered when finalizing the Conference agenda.

The meeting officially ended at 6.35 p.m.

.../Appendix

**MEETING OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Paris, Monday 23 May 2016

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda (Dr Budimir Plavšić, Delegate of Serbia and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe);
2. Report on OIE Council meetings (Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and Past President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates);
3. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow, and the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana (Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub Regional Representative in Brussels, Dr Mereke Taitubayev, Head of the OIE Sub Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana);
4. Rinderpest post-eradication activities (Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission, Scientific and Technical Department);
5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018 (Dr Budimir Plavšić);
6. Selection of Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Dr Budimir Plavšić);
7. Organisation of the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, to be held in Lisbon, Portugal from 19 to 23 September 2016 (Prof. Dr Álvaro Mendonça, Delegate of Portugal);
8. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head, OIE Scientific and Technical Department);
9. Status of notifications by Members in Europe (Dr Marija Popovic, Chargée de mission, OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department);
10. Peste des petits ruminants situation in Georgia (Dr Mikheil Sokhadze, Delegate of Georgia);
11. Latest developments regarding the OIE Regional Platform on Animal Welfare in Europe (Dr Nadège Leboucq);
12. Latest developments regarding the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region (Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow);
13. Implementation of the OIE PVS Pathway in Central Asia (Dr Mereke Taitubayev);
14. Election of the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Dr Karin Schwabenbauer);
15. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE:
 - European Commission (EC)
 - Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC)
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
16. Other matters.

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

Paris, 23 May 2016

The OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East met on 23 May 2016 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 56 participants, including Delegates and observers from 14 Members of the Commission, 1 observer territory, and representatives from 6 international or regional organisations:

Members of the Commission: Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

Observer countries/territories: Palestinian Autonomous Territories.

International/regional organisations: CIWF⁶⁰, EAHS⁶¹, FAO, INSCA⁶², IZS⁶³ and The Donkey Sanctuary.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani (Qatar), President of the OIE Regional Commission, assisted by Dr Ghazi Yehia, OIE Regional Representative for the Middle East.

The President welcomed the Delegates, observers and representatives of international and regional organisations.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, described in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted.

2. Report on OIE Council meetings

Dr Hadi Mohsin Al-Lawati, Delegate of Oman and Member of the Council, began his presentation by providing details on Council members and the geographical rotation of the office of President of the OIE. He pointed out that it was customary for the President to have first held the office of Vice-President, which demanded a degree of continuity of the Delegate in question.

Dr Al-Lawati then informed Delegates that the OIE Council had met three times since the last General Session at which the Council was elected. The meetings were held in October 2015, February 2016 and May 2016 and looked at issues of strategic importance for the OIE, including major administrative matters, some of which would be presented to the 84th General Session in the form of draft resolutions. He added that the Council had continued

⁶⁰ CIWF: Compassion in World Farming

⁶¹ EAHS: Emirates Arabian Horse Society

⁶² INSCA: International Natural Sausage Casing Association

⁶³ IZS: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale, Italy

to discuss the implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020), particularly at the February 2016 meeting.

Dr Al-Lawati provided a brief review of the most important issues addressed at the Council meetings, as follows:

1. Detailed appraisal of the 83rd General Session with a view to suggesting improvements for the 84th General Session.
2. Considering the significantly improved recovery of arrears in recent years, the Council wished to review the procedure for implementing Article 5 of the General Rules of the OIE. The Council decided that Member Countries with arrears of five years or more would not be entitled to vote at the 2016 General Session and their Delegates would not receive the Delegate's allowance.
3. A specific point was emphasised with regard to the procedure for accessing dossiers from Member Countries seeking recognition for official status: namely that Member Countries applying for recognition of their status are required to respond, within 10 days, to requests from other Member Countries for information on the dossier within the 60-day commenting period.
4. After receiving requests for new OIE Representations to be opened, the Council decided that it would first have to consider which criteria would need to be taken into account when deciding whether to open a new OIE office, given that the Organisation is already experiencing financial difficulties with the operation of several Representations.
5. The Council endorsed the principle of a performance evaluation framework document for the OIE Specialist Commissions and suggested that indicators be used. All the Presidents and Members of the four Specialist Commissions have been informed of this new procedure. The Council examined the initial proposals for establishing an evaluation grid.
6. The Council also encouraged efforts to make the Spanish and French language versions of Specialist Commission reports available as quickly as possible to provide sufficient time for comments.
7. It discussed the issue of access to reports of the *ad hoc* groups and the possibility of making these reports available on the website.
8. The Council considered agreements with other international organisations. The Council approved the signing of agreements with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Indian Ocean Commission.
9. It discussed the platform provided in the Asia/Pacific region to facilitate the exchange of information among countries in the region. This facility does not exempt Member Countries from submitting their comments officially to the OIE. This initiative could be extended to the other regions if it proves successful following several months in operation.

At the Council meetings in February and May 2016, special attention was paid to administrative, budgetary and statutory issues, as well as to the preparation of the 84th General Session.

Finally, Dr Al-Lawati reported that with regard to preparing the 84th General Session, the Council considered proposals from the Director General on the organisation of the General Session and reviewed the Delegates' nominations for awards in the Gold and Merit

categories. The Council also validated the working programme presented by the Director General, prior to its approval by the Assembly, as well as the new organisational chart, which will be finalised and implemented after the General Session.

3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East

Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani, Delegate of Qatar and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, reported that outstanding contributions from a number of countries were a matter of concern.

He encouraged Members of the Regional Commission for the Middle East to upgrade their level of statutory contributions to the OIE in line with their national level of economic development, in order to support the activities of the Regional Commission and Regional Representation more effectively, adding that further efforts should also be made to find new sources of funding for OIE activities in the region.

He stressed the relevance of maintaining regular regional scientific meetings, in particular capacity building seminars for OIE National Focal Points in the various fields of activity, as part of the process of strengthening Veterinary Services. In that regard, he commented on the seminar on animal welfare that had already been held in April 2016 (in Amman, Jordan) and those to be held later this year, on veterinary laboratories (September 2016), disease notification (November 2016) and aquatic animal diseases (December 2016).

He concluded by announcing specific regional activities planned later this year, which still have to be confirmed: a regional conference on rabies control (September 2016), as recommended by the 13th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, held in Kaslik in November 2015; FAO/OIE Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) regional roadmap meetings on Progressive Control Pathways for foot and mouth disease (FMD) and peste des petits ruminants (PPR) (October 2016); animal welfare activities under the Middle East Animal Welfare Action Plan for 2016-19; activities relating to camel diseases.

Dr Al Qahtani concluded by acknowledging a motion of thanks to the countries hosting the regional activities: Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East

Dr Ghazi Yehia, OIE Regional Representative for the Middle East, described the main objectives of the activities implemented by the OIE Regional Representation over the previous 12 months, which had focused mainly on building the capacity of Veterinary Services and contributing to animal disease prevention and control in the Middle East.

Dr Yehia provided details of the assistance given to countries wishing to take part in laboratory twinning-like projects: Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA) with Italy's Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS) for camel diseases; Jordan Bio-Industries Center (JOVAC) with the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) for PPR vaccine; CVLBR with CIRAD for diseases of small ruminants, with specific reference to PPR and contagious caprine pleuropneumonia; Yemen with South Africa for Rift Valley fever; and Yemen with the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES) for bee diseases.

He presented the conclusions of: the 13th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, held in Kaslik (Lebanon) on 10-13 November 2015; the sub-regional camel diseases conference, held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) on 14-16 February 2016; and the OIE Regional Conference "Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning", held in Amman (Jordan) on 3-5 April 2016.

He also provided a brief summary of planned activities over the coming seven months, highlighting that, for some of them, the budget still had to be confirmed, including: seminar for National Focal Points for laboratories, (September 2016); regional conference on rabies control (September 2016); seminar for National Focal Points for disease notification (Sharm El Sheikh, November 2016); regional roadmap meetings on Progressive Control Pathways for FMD and PPR (October 2016); disease status and endorsed control programme recognition training (October 2016); seminar for National Focal Points for aquatic animals (Jeddah, December 2016).

5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the Agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018

The following technical item (including a questionnaire to Members) was proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 86th General Session:

- Levels of good emergency management practices (GEMP) at ministerial level

6. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 14th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East

The following technical item (including a questionnaire to Members) was adopted for the 14th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East:

- Sustainable strengthening of the epidemio-surveillance systems in Middle East Member Countries

7. Rinderpest post-eradication activities

Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission from the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, briefly summarised the rinderpest post-eradication era since 2011 by pointing out positive progress in reducing the risk of re-emergence. In 2015-2016, Australia, Brazil and Switzerland destroyed their stored rinderpest virus-containing materials (RVCM); Botswana transferred all its RVCM to AU PANVAC; and Japan transferred RVCM to the rinderpest holding facility in Tokyo and destroyed its RVCM holdings in other non-approved facilities.

While these efforts are to be commended, global freedom remains at risk while the virus continues to be stored in numerous locations. She highlighted another opportunity to reduce holdings through the “sequence and destroy project” with the United Kingdom’s Pirbright Institute and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). The aim of the project is to destroy all the RVCM after collecting its full-genome sequences. She encouraged Member Countries to take part in the project.

Finally, she reported that the FAO-OIE Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee continued to meet to review applications and to advise on policies and future activities in the post-eradication era. In conclusion, she reminded Delegates to maintain their national contingency plans, carry out general surveillance, and continue their annual reporting, as stipulated in Chapter 8.15 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

8. Confirmation of the venue of the 14th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East to be held in September 2017

Dr Nihat Pakdil, Delegate of Turkey, confirmed the offer of his country to host the 14th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East. The Conference will be held in Istanbul (Turkey) in September 2017.

9. Status of notifications by Members in Middle East

Dr Neo Mapitse, Deputy Head of the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, gave a brief update on the status of notifications by Members in the Region as of 20 May 2016. He started by providing detailed regional information on compliance with reporting for 2015, separately for terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases. Then, he showed the percentage of Members with outstanding reports and encouraged them to submit the reports, not only for 2015 but also for previous years, emphasising the importance of timely disease reporting by countries/territories through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and of their providing other epidemiological information on disease prevention and control. Dr Mapitse also gave an overview of the OIE-listed diseases and infections currently of major interest in the region. Dr Mapitse concluded by presenting the results of the online survey “Evaluation of WAHIS, 10 years after the launch”, which was designed to gather feedback from Veterinary Authorities on their level of satisfaction as WAHIS users, the challenges experienced during the notification process and suggestions for improvement. He highlighted the topics most frequently cited by respondents in the region as needing improvement.

10. Outcomes of the 13th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, held in Kaslik, Lebanon, from 10 to 14 November 2015

Dr Ghazi Yehia presented the following recommendations adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 14 November 2015 at its 13th Regional Conference.

Recommendation No. 1: *Control of rabies in the Middle East Region, with emphasis on stray dog control:*

1. The Member Countries, with the support of the OIE, WHO, and FAO, develop and adopt a Regional Strategy for the eradication of rabies from the Middle East in which the vaccination of dogs and the control of stray dog populations, in compliance with the relevant OIE standards, including Animal Welfare standards, will be key components;
2. The Member Countries develop national roadmaps, including extension programmes, for the control of rabies, which will provide a pathway towards achieving the objectives of the aforementioned Regional Strategy, based on measurable activities and realistic timelines and indicators;
3. The Veterinary Services of Member Countries collaborate with the Public Health Services (Ministry of Public Health), municipalities, relevant NGOs and local communities to develop the national roadmaps and benefit from the cost-effective advantage of eliminating rabies at the animal source through appropriate programmes;
4. The Member Countries, with the support of the OIE and in collaboration with WHO and FAO, update and enforce their legislation (in accordance with the Regional Strategy) to comply with relevant standards, including those of the OIE, for effective rabies prevention and control, and stray dog population control;
5. The OIE, in collaboration with WHO and FAO, organise biennial “One Health” coordination regional workshops in the Middle East to provide technical support and monitor the progress of the Member Countries, to discuss future steps and actions, and, when relevant, to review and update the aforementioned Regional Strategy;
6. The OIE, with the financial contribution of Member Countries and donors, consider the establishment of an OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank to which Member Countries of the Middle East region would have access; and

7. The OIE, provided funding is available, organise in 2016 a Regional Conference in the Middle East aimed at presenting to Member Countries the OIE standards applicable to rabies and stray dog population control, establishing the baseline situation of the Member Countries and validating the aforementioned Regional Strategy.

Recommendation No. 2: *The use of non-structural proteins to differentiate between vaccinated and infected animals:*

1. According to their national FMD status, and their official control programme, including vaccination strategy, Member Countries clearly define the purpose of sero-surveys: e.g. (i) to determine the serological prevalence, (ii) to provide robust evidence that the country or a zone of the country is free from FMD, and (iii) to monitor the population immunity after vaccination;
2. With the support from the OIE/FAO FMD Laboratory Network, Member Countries identify and compile the FMDV field strains currently circulating in the Middle East region as well as the strains that could sporadically occur; and
3. Member Countries compile a list of all vaccines (including details of manufacturers, specific FMDV strains, formulations, and degree of purity) that are currently deployed or available in the Middle East region.

11. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session

Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head of the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, began her presentation by saying that the 83rd World Assembly of OIE Delegates in 2015 had adopted Resolution No. 26 on combating antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals, following Resolution No. 25 on veterinary products adopted in 2009 and recommendations made at the first OIE Global Conference on the Responsible and Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals in 2013. One major point of Resolution 26 relates to the collection of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals with a view to establishing a global database. Major progress has been achieved in this area and OIE Member Countries have made considerable efforts. Indeed, a response rate of over 70% to the challenging questionnaire is seen as a real success. The results of the first phase of the project will be presented under Technical Item 2 on Tuesday. However, the response rate from Middle East countries was not adequate. She encouraged OIE Members from this region to increase the level of participation.

She went on to explain that Resolution 26 also invited Member Countries to follow the guidance of the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR developed with the support of the OIE and in the spirit of the “One Health” approach. Since the Global Action Plan was adopted in May 2015, the fight against AMR under the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Collaboration has reached an unprecedented political level.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed out that the issue of AMR had been mentioned at the G7 Health Ministers’ meeting in Berlin (Germany) in October 2015, attended by Dr Monique Eloit, as well as at the recent G7 Agriculture Ministers’ meeting in Japan in April 2016. The next step envisioned is a resolution or high-level document on AMR endorsed by the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. To prepare this important event, in April 2016 the Tripartite hosted a High-Level Dialogue on AMR at the United Nations in New York to raise awareness of AMR and to invite participants to follow up with their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Dr Erlacher-Vindel concluded by saying that the OIE and its Member Countries had made major efforts in recent years to update and complete the standards and to adopt ambitious recommendations. Dr Erlacher-Vindel pointed to the need to collectively communicate on these achievements and to seek solidarity to support Member Countries in progressing with the implementation of standards, taking a step-wise approach. To this end, she noted that the OIE Council had proposed Technical Item 2 on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through a “One Health Approach”: Actions and OIE Strategy, which would address OIE achievements and projects and would provide the basis for the OIE strategy.

Dr Ghazi Yehia commented that national contact points for antimicrobial resistance have been nominated in the Middle East region upon a specific request from the WHO Regional Office. He highlighted that these contact points are not always the OIE National Focal Points for veterinary products. Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel concluded that this appears to be a specific problem in the region, which should be addressed.

The Delegate of Qatar stressed that the questionnaire on antimicrobial resistance required too much and detailed information. Dr Erlacher-Vindel requested that a response for baseline information should be provided as a minimum, and that the remaining information could be submitted to the OIE at a later stage.

12. Activities undertaken by the Hashemite Fund for Development of Jordan Badia

Her Highness Sharifa Zein Alsharaf bint Nasser briefly presented the activities undertaken by the Hashemite Fund for Development of Jordan Badia (HFDJB). She referred to the OIE Regional Conference “Towards the Application of the OIE Standards on Zoning”, held in Amman (Jordan) on 3-5 April 2016 with the support of the HFDJB, which had been attended by 61 participants, including 25 representatives from the Veterinary Services of 14 countries from the Middle East.

She went on to explain that the HFDJB had launched a livestock trading project in Mohammadiya (southern Jordan) with goals in three strategic areas: (i) socio-economic (to develop the local economy, creating 1,000 direct and indirect jobs) and food security; (ii) commercial (to increase regional trade in livestock through capacity-building to enable the import and re-export of up to 200,000 head per month, worth USD 0.5 billion per year; and (iii) animal health (in public-private partnership with the Jordanian Veterinary Services, supported by international expertise, to establish a disease-free zone around the project area and to secure high health standards in regional livestock trade).

She added that the strong involvement of the Jordanian Government in the public-private partnership (the project is a national priority) was a valuable asset in the pursuit of recognition for the zoning concept in the Middle East, with the technical assistance of the OIE, European Union and Italy.

She concluded by saying that the presentations and fruitful discussions between Delegates and experts paved the way for further appropriation of the zoning concept in the region, as well as for more regional dialogue between trading partners and for harmonisation of animal health import requirements in the region, in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), as reflected in the “Amman Declaration”.

13. State of play of the twinning project between the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA) and the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS)* on camel diseases

His Excellency Adel Al Zaabi, Executive Director of the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA), began his presentation by pointing out that increasing global demand for live camels and their products and the higher risk of transboundary animal diseases and zoonotic diseases posed by growing international trade in camels, had led the OIE, through

a specialised *ad hoc* group, to recommend the establishment of both a regional reference centre for the epidemiology and diagnosis of camel diseases and a network of laboratories.

He said that, to address this challenge, in May 2015 ADFCA had funded a twinning-like project on camel diseases with Italy's IZS in Brescia, Palermo and Teramo. Its purpose is to establish a regional centre on camel diseases within ADFCA, which, after at least five years, is expected to become the first OIE Collaborating Centre specialised in the diagnosis and epidemiology of camel diseases. Beyond the transfer of technical skills and scientific capacity-building, the project's specific aims are to identify priority diseases of camels in the Arabian Peninsula and to develop standard diagnostic techniques and specific vaccines and vaccination protocols for these diseases in compliance with OIE standards.

14. Validation of the Middle East Animal Welfare Strategy implementation plan 2016-2019

Professor Hassan Aidaros, Member of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group, presented the Middle East Animal Welfare (ME AW) Action Plan for 2016-2019 for final comments and adoption by the Regional Commission for the Middle East.

He described the strategic objective of the Action Plan (empowering Veterinary Services to take animal welfare actions in compliance with OIE standards) and its three specific objectives: (i) raising awareness and achieving a high level of understanding of animal welfare in the Middle East; (2) steadily advancing with the implementation of OIE standards on animal welfare; and (3) encouraging Member Countries to take part in the OIE standard-setting process, with the CG serving as the major cross-cutting activity for meeting these three technical objectives.

Prof. Aidaros presented the four priorities of the Action Plan: transport of animals by sea (OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* Chapter 7.2); transport of animals by land (Chapter 7.3); slaughter of animals (Chapter 7.5); and stray dog population control (Chapter 7.7).

He concluded by listing the priority activities of the Action Plan, as follows:

- to prepare an advocacy document on the ME RAWs and Action Plan in order to attract donors (key activity supporting the others);
- to organise the governance and implementation of the Action Plan (meetings of the CG);
- to develop an OIE website on animal welfare in the Middle East;
- to organise training of trainers on livestock handling and welfare during transport by land and sea, and during time spent on farm/feedlot and time spent at the slaughterhouse;
- to organise a regional workshop on animal welfare for slaughter livestock (transport, handling and slaughter); and
- to organise a regional workshop on stray dog population control.

The Middle East Animal Welfare Strategy Implementation Plan was unanimously adopted.

In addition, the Delegate of the United Arab Emirates announced the organisation of the first Animal Welfare Conference in this country, which will be held before the end of the year. Furthermore, Dr Ghazi Yehia announced that the Sub-Regional Conference on Rabies Control in the Near East that would be held in September 2016, depending on availability of funds, would include a stray dog population control component.

15. Election of the Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East

Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani, Delegate of Qatar and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, informed participants that, as the Delegate of Saudi Arabia had changed, leaving vacant the position of Vice-President of the Regional Commission, a partial election needed to be held.

The Commission unanimously nominated the Delegate of United Arab Emirates, Dr Majid Al-Qassimi, as Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East.

16. Presentations from organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Dr Markos Tibbo, Livestock Officer at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, began his presentation by explaining that FAO assisted member countries by building their capacity in: surveillance, prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases (FMD, lumpy skin disease, PPR) and zoonoses (H5N1 AI, Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus [MERS-CoV], brucellosis); improving animal productivity and efficiency; and assessing the status of animal genetic resources. Factors such as disruption of Veterinary Services in countries affected by conflict and a rise in unregulated movements of animals have increased the threat of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses in the region. FAO has provided training in: good emergency management practices; biosecurity measures; and preparedness for and response to animal disease emergencies. It has also provided a neutral stakeholder forum.

Dr Tibbo added that FAO provided direct support for the surveillance, diagnosis and control of priority animal diseases (FMD, PPR, lumpy skin disease, Rift Valley fever, highly pathogenic avian influenza (subtype H5N1), MERS-CoV). To that end, FAO organises major events, in collaboration with the OIE and the World Health Organization (WHO), on such issues as: contribution of livestock to food security; FMD and PPR control and eradication; MERS-CoV and “One Health”; camel diseases; antimicrobial resistance. He also announced the opening of a FAO Subregional Office for Mashreq countries in Lebanon, an Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) Office in Jordan, and a FAO Country Office in Kuwait.

He concluded by saying that FAO had provided technical, institutional or policy advice through capacity-building, knowledge management and the mobilisation of experts on sustainable livestock production and the management of feed and animal genetic resources. It had also helped small-scale dairy, poultry and small ruminant farmers to increase their produce, income, access to markets and resilience to shocks.

The Delegate of the United Arab Emirates mentioned the importance to develop local capacities on food security within the Middle East region, in particular by preserving and improving the genetics of local breeds.

The meeting ended at 5:45 p.m.

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**MEETING OF THE
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

Paris, Monday 23 May 2016

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda (Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani, Delegate of Qatar and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Middle East);
2. Report on OIE Council meetings (Dr Hadi Mohsin Al-Lawati, Delegate of Oman and Member of the Council);
3. Report of the President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East (Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani);
4. Report on the activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East (Dr Ghazi Yehia, OIE Regional Representative for the Middle East);
5. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the Agenda of the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2018 (Dr Hadi Mohsin Al-Lawati);
6. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 14th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East (Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani);
7. Rinderpest post-eradication activities (Ms Tianna Brand, Chargée de mission, Scientific and Technical Department);
8. Confirmation of the venue of the 14th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East to be held in September 2017 (Dr Nihat Pakdil, Delegate of Turkey);
9. Status of notifications by Members in Middle East (Dr Neo Mapitse, Deputy Head, OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department);
10. Outcomes of the 13th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, held in Kaslik, Lebanon, from 10 to 14 November 2015 (Dr Ghazi Yehia);
11. Update on antimicrobial resistance: actions and events since the 83rd General Session (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Deputy Head, OIE Scientific and Technical Department);
12. Activities undertaken by the Hashemite Fund for Development of Jordan Badia (Her Highness Sharifa Zein Alsharaf bint Nasser);
13. State of play of the twinning project between the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA) and the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS)* on camel diseases (Dr Salama Al Muhairi, UAE-ADFCA);
14. Validation of the Middle East Animal Welfare Strategy implementation plan 2016- 2019 (Prof. Hassan Aidaros, Member of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group);
15. Election of the Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East (Dr Kassem Al-Qahtani);
16. Presentations from Organisations that have concluded an official agreement with the OIE:
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
17. Other matters.

