

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources of the African Union (AU/IBAR) in line with its main mandate i.e. co-ordinate and harmonize national livestock policies aiming at creating an enabling environment for a healthy livestock population and therefore an export market, organized a symposium on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Kiriyanga Conference Room at Nairobi Safari Club (Kenya) from 14 to 16 September 2005.

The Representatives of the World Animal Health Organization (OIE), Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, the Members of the Executive of the OIE Regional Commission for Africa, the Representatives of Center for Disease Control (CDC), KARI, ILRI, Veterinary Services of Kenya and the AU/IBAR/PACE staff attended this important forum.

The Director of AU/IBAR chaired the opening ceremony during which 3 speeches were delivered.

The Director of AU/IBAR explained the reason behind the organisation of this forum and expressed his deep appreciation to OIE and FAO for responding to the invitation at a very short notice. He thanked all the participants for accepting to come and share their experience and knowledge on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. He expressed his hope that the symposium will come up with appropriate recommendations and assured the participants that AU/IBAR will give the necessary support for their implementation. He wished successful deliberations and declared the symposium opened.

The OIE Regional Representative for Africa thanked AU/IBAR for associating OIE to this important event. He highlighted the commitment

of the World Animal Health Organisation to support all the AU/IBAR activities towards the control and eradication of major diseases causing disaster to African livestock. He wished successful deliberations.

The Head of Animal Production and Health Division of the FAO congratulated AU/IBAR for the wisdom to organise this symposium at this point in time when the issue of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza became worldwide concern. He made a brief summary on the epidemiological situation worldwide regarding the disease. He commented on the recent spread of the disease in Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Russia with particular emphasis on the possible role played by wild birds particularly waterfowl in the disseminating of the H5N1 strain into previous free regions with a real possibility of increasing the risk of human global pandemic. He highlighted the major activities carried out by FAO jointly with OIE and WHO since the occurrence of first outbreak in Asia to control the disease. He briefed the participants on the activities foreseen by FAO in the short term to assist AU/IBAR Member States to prevent the introduction of HPAI into Africa.

During the three days of the symposium all the topics foreseen in the agenda were addressed:

- Meeting Objectives and structure
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza: Epidemiology and Laboratory Diagnosis
- Review of the contribution of wild migratory birds to the epidemiology of HPAI
- HPAI epidemiological situation and risk analysis of its introduction into Africa
- Principles for surveillance and diagnosis of HPAI

- Current situation of HPAI and recommendations of meetings organized jointly by FAO and OIE in collaboration with WHO
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza; Epidemiology of the disease and control strategies.

In a working group session 4 major issues were discussed:

- Investigations on the current situation of AI
- Prevention and Control
- Regional and International Collaboration
- Way Forward

After fruitful deliberations and in recognition of the following:

1. The socio-economic and public health impact of recent HPAI outbreaks in Asia
2. The potential severity of an HPAI outbreak on the poverty and food insecurity status of Africa's massive populations
3. The rapid spread of the disease in a rapidly globalizing world and Africa's ill-preparedness and lack of awareness,
4. The lack of information on the HPAI epidemiological status in most of the Member States.
5. The possible role of wild birds migrating from H5N1 endemic regions to Africa

The symposium recommends:

1. Investigations

To Member states:

- To submit to AU/IBAR, as a matter of urgency, a comprehensive report on the status of the Avian Influenza suspected and/or

confirmed outbreaks recorded in the past in their respective countries.

- To undertake targeted surveys (includes serology and other relevant methods) to assess the current status with regard to HPAI, according to epidemiological situation particularly with regard to trade exposure and migration of wild birds
- Other member states are encouraged to undertake targeted surveys to assess the current status with regard to HPAI.
- All Member States to send comprehensive reports to IBAR using the format, which will be prepared shortly.

To AU/IBAR:

- Liaise with other interest groups on AI with reference e.g. on public health CDC to assess the status of the continent with regard to HPAI.
- Seek funding for research on assessment of the (potential) role of wildlife (birds, warthog, bush pigs?) and aberrant species in the epidemiology of HPAI in Africa.
- Liaise with FAO and OIE to promote HPAI investigations.

2. Prevention

To Member States

- Demonstrate their political will and commitment to the global strategy against the notifiable Avian Influenza/ Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza scourge.
- Include HPAI in the surveillance and diagnostic systems
- Strengthen the existing epidemio-surveillance network
- Develop an EPP for HPAI

- Report all cases of Avian Influenza and in particular HPAI to IBAR and OIE and sharing information with FAO.

To AU/IBAR

- Develop a regional EPP in collaboration with RECs and International organisations i.e. FAO, OIE and WHO
- Put in place at continental level HPAI surveillance and laboratory networks based on PACE experience.
- Share information with FAO and WHO
- Urge member states to take concrete measures to prevent the introduction into the continent and to use to this effect the existing tools developed under the PACE programme.

3. Control:

To Member States

- Implement developed EPP with special emphasis on strategy adopted using the tools described in the EPP and the FAO/OIE guidelines....
- Strengthen the existing epidemio-surveillance network.

To AU/IBAR

- To assist countries in developing national strategy and plans in coherence with FAO/OIE Global Strategy according to epidemiological conditions and production system with the participation of private sector, public health services and NGOs using the following tools: stamping out, modified stamping out, bio-security and vaccination.
- Strengthen continental PACE surveillance and laboratory networks.

4. Regional and International collaboration

To Member States

- Reinforce collaboration with FAO-OIE-WHO, IAEA, IUCN and multilateral and Bilateral Donor Agencies.
- Reinforce cooperation with international research institutions (OIE/FAO Avian Influenza network OFFLU, ILRI, CDC, ...)

To AU/IBAR:

- Reinforce collaboration with FAO-OIE-WHO, IAEA, IUCN and multilateral and Bilateral Donor Agencies.
- Reinforce cooperation with international research institutions (OIE/FAO Avian Influenza network OFFLU, ILRI, CDC, ...)
- Organise a seminar to sensitise National Veterinary Services on the epidemiology, surveillance, diagnosis, prevention and control of Notifiable Avian Influenza, in particular HPAI.
- In collaboration with FAO, OIE, Cooperating partners and donor agencies raise the necessary funds to support the National Veterinary Services of AU member States to strengthen their NAI/HPAI surveillance and diagnostic capacities, their prevention and control measures and their capacity and institutional building and epidemiological networking to ensure that an early detection, early warning and early response system is in place.

To FAO:

- To implement as soon as possible in collaboration with AU/IBAR the foreseen TCPs to assist AU member states to build capacity in preventing and controlling HPAI.

Nairobi, 16th September 2005