

**OIE REGIONAL SEMINAR ON COMMUNICATION
GABORONE, BOTSWANA 22-23 September 2009**

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSIDERING THAT

- The OIE international Committee voted in May 2001 Resolution n° XXI on the “role of communication management in assisting Veterinary Services”,
- This Resolution recommends on its article 7 that the OIE provide support to Members,
- This resolution refers to communication, beyond extension or education activities,
- The outcomes of several OIE PVS evaluations so far conducted in the Africa region,
- The worldwide focus on animal health issues leads to an increased demand for accurate and scientifically-based opinion and information on animal diseases, including zoonoses,
- The responsibility of national Veterinary services to help ensure animal disease control, food safety, food security thus contributing to poverty alleviation,
- The regulation for the control of animal diseases and zoonoses in international trade of animals and animal products calls for accountability of national veterinary services and competent authorities, towards the general public and other stakeholders,
- Permanent accurate and timely communication between animal health authorities and public health authorities is a key factor for preventing and controlling zoonoses, such as promoted by the OWOH concept,
- The transparency and quality of communication and information management, in particular in crisis situations are issues of national, sub-regional, regional and global strategic significance,
- The multiplicity of communication projects and initiatives carried out by relevant organisations within the region,
- The development of information and communication strategies contributes to improving the functioning and the acceptance of the scientific, technical and operational output of Veterinary Services,
- The major role of media in disseminating information as well as in raising public awareness,
- Members and the OIE must have access to adequate human, technical and financial resources in order to manage information and communication at the national, regional, sub regional and global level and methodological training in this field is indispensable,

PARTICIPANTS OF THE SEMINAR

RECOMMEND THAT

1. An improved global, regional, sub-regional and national veterinary governance must encompass communication policies, strategies and resources directed to the stakeholders and the general public;

2. The importance of the process of communication must be among the priorities of OIE Regional and Sub Regional Representations, RAHCs and national Veterinary Services, particularly for disseminating information;
3. The OIE continue to provide technical support to all Members particularly developing countries to strengthen the communication capacities in the Veterinary Services in order to continuously respond to national and international demands and to help Members to comply with OIE standards, guidelines and recommendations;
4. Members should assess their needs taking into account the relevant criteria of the OIE PVS Tool to develop information and communication strategies within Veterinary Services to respond to both crisis situations and routine/long term requirements;
5. Communication teams, including professional communicators, should be fully integrated as a component of the Veterinary Services and under the direct authority of the Veterinary Authorities;
6. Chief Veterinary Officers should request Government authorities to provide adequate organisational and budgetary support for the communication objectives of Veterinary Services, including communication training, in accordance with Resolution XXI of May 2001 voted by all OIE Members;
7. National Veterinary Services communication teams liaise closely and on a regular basis with OIE and other relevant international organisations, on specific events requiring coordination in information, dissemination and/or communication management;
8. National Veterinary Services communication teams liaise with their counterparts within the public health services for the coordination in information, dissemination and/or communication strategy and management on the prevention and control of zoonoses;
9. National Veterinary Services must communicate with other relevant stakeholders (private sector, producers, consumers),
10. Members identify and communicate to the OIE the data of the communication officer within the communication team of their national Veterinary Services, the team and the officer being nominated by and under the general direction of the Chief Veterinary Officer;
11. The OIE provide Members with the guidelines of communication and information strategies within its field of competence, and assist Members in developing strategies in collaboration with the RAHC and Regional Economic Communities through existing alliances and coordination mechanisms such as the GF-Tads,
12. Media training sessions on relevant animal health issues are being organised on a regular basis by the national Veterinary Services, with the possible assistance of the OIE Regional and/or Sub-Regional office,
13. OIE Members are urged to proactively make transparent and science based information available to the media and the general public, thereby strengthening Veterinary Service's public image as an accountable and authoritative source of information on any relevant event relating to animal health and public health;
14. The OIE be considered by its Members as the lead organisation for development of international strategies on the communication of standards, guidelines and recommendations on animal health and

welfare and the relevant OIE press releases and editorials, as well as any OIE communication support, be taken as an appropriate basis for the communication of national Veterinary Services.