

**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-IBAR¹, CEBEVIRHA², FAO³, IGAD⁴, WAEMU⁵.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Komla Batasse 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.

¹ AU-IBAR: African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources

² CEBEVIRHA: Economic Commission on Cattle, Meat and Fish Resources in the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)

³ FAO : Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

⁴ IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development

⁵ WAEMU: West African Economic and Monetary Union

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.

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 Batasse 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 - Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy, 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. Elsawalhy 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. Elsawalhy 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.

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

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda (Dr Komla Bataste 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 Bataste 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).