



FAO AND OIE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE **CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF PESTE DES PETITS RUMINANTS (PPR)**
ABIDJAN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE 31 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2015

Speech of Mr. Bukar Tijani

**FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa at FAO-OIE PPR Conference,
March 2014**

Honorable Ministers of Agriculture and Livestock,

Dr Bernard Vallat, Director-General of the World Organization for Animal Health,

Excellencies Members of Diplomatic Corps and Representatives of the International institutions in
Côte d'Ivoire,

Distinguished Experts, Partners and Participants, the Media and other Friends,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Akwaba, Bienvenue, Marhaba, Welcome!

On behalf of FAO and the Director-General, Mr. José Graziano da Silva, I am pleased to be associated with this history-making International Conference and I wish to extend the profound appreciation of the Director-General of FAO to His Excellency Dr Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Government and the good People of Côte d'Ivoire, our Ivorian hosts, for making this Conference possible and the warm welcome received by all.

FAO pays tribute to all of you for joining FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health [OIE] in the fight against yet another animal disease of great importance in the alleviation of poverty, hunger and one that cripples the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people and their communities.

The growing world's population is a powerful driving force and more people today live in cities than in rural areas. By the year 2050, nearly 2/3 of the people will be city dwellers. Close to 90 percent of the increase in the global urban population will take place in the urban centers of Africa and Asia. Feeding the cities will be a major challenge. Peri-urban agriculture—including livestock—will have to grow to meet the challenge, but this growth needs to be done responsibly and in a sustainable manner.

Today we are seeking for ways to set the general direction for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals towards Food Security and Nutrition as well as Sustainable Agriculture including livestock development. We are also looking toward identifying actions that can add value to what countries and regions are doing. The Control and Eradication of PPR fits strongly among these goals.

I may not be the best person to speak about Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) as most of you here have greater expertise than I have, but let me put some items in perspective.

Globally, livestock contributes 43% of agriculture Global Domestic Product (GDP). This is a very important number that should be taken in consideration when we invest in agricultural programmes of development, sustainable systems, and try to optimize the goods and services and the responsibilities of producers, extension services and the veterinary systems we have in place, or should have in place.

Smallholder livestock producers account for about 20 percent of the world population. Livestock production and marketing are important for the livelihoods of about one billion poor people. Almost 80 percent of the global sheep and goat population (2.1 billions) is at risk of PPR.

Sheep and goat populations are important sources of quality protein, micronutrients and vitamins for millions of people, especially in impoverished areas of the globe. And while PPR is not a zoonotic disease that can directly trigger human disease, having the nutritious by-products accessible and available to our families and communities does contribute to human health, a child's cognitive growth, a women's pre-natal and post-natal welfare.

The African Union theme for 2015 - Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063, focuses on ways to enhance the potential women have to bring about change in Africa.

Women are, more often than men, the primary caretakers of sheep and goats, making them an important resource for their empowerment. While women's role in small ruminant production varies depending on the culture, in most cases they are responsible for milking, processing and selling milk products, providing feed/fodder, caring for new-born lambs/kids and sick animals. When women lose their small ruminants, they can be marginalized out of livestock production altogether and may be forced to migrate to the cities where they are likely to experience peri-urban poverty, overcrowding and face the different nutritional challenges posed by sedentary lifestyles.

The 194-country membership of FAO mirrors that of the World Health Organization – concerns about health and welfare unite us. Our partnership is key for a successful support to our regional communities, our countries, our herders and their communities, our people.

The OIE was created in 1924 before the establishment of the UN and is recognized as a reference organization by the World Trade Organization (WTO). It intervenes through its country delegates who are usually Chief Veterinary Officers. Its objectives are: Transparency, Scientific information, International solidarity, Sanitary safety, Promotion of Veterinary Services and Food safety and animal welfare. This is very clear to us.

FAO, whose origins date from the 1905 establishment of the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA) in Rome, and its animal health facets is part of the United Nations family. FAO was created to:

- Address food shortages, and under the current corporate mandate, to “improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise the standard of living of rural populations and contribute to global economic growth.”

- FAO intervenes at national level, mainly through the Ministries of Agriculture or Livestock (but also Fisheries and Natural Resources and Forestry) and its strengths are in regional coordination, interface with regional economic or development institutions, and capacity development on the ground, as well as implement international standards, like those of the OIE.
- FAO's mandate, as you can imagine, is much broader than animal health and provides a multi-disciplinary approach, but animal health is a very important part of the overall objective.
- FAO is resourced by a system of field officers, decentralized offices, sub-regional and regional hubs supported and lead by central headquarters.

Animal Health in FAO is about addressing food insecurities, helping produce better and safer food supplies (Codex with WHO) and rural economies, as well as addressing shocks of the agricultural communities. Such shocks include the animal disease burdens that affect people and their livelihoods.

The global eradication of rinderpest in 2011 was a historical moment. During the 37th Conference of FAO, the Heads of State and Ministers “encouraged FAO to take full advantage of the rinderpest eradication achievement and apply the lessons learned to prevent and control other diseases impacting on food security, public health, the sustainability of agriculture systems and rural development”.

And the concept of the establishment of the PPR Global Control and Eradication Programme (PPR-GCEP), based on the successful FAO-led Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP), was endorsed by the 24th Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture and subsequently by the 150th Council in December 2014.

The successful implementation of the PPR control and eradication program not only requires political will, but will require networking and partnership with researchers, the private sector, farmers' organizations and donors, among others. FAO has already started building partnership with all of you present in this room.

If the major achievement of eradicating rinderpest can be replicated for another major transboundary animal disease such as the Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), there will be a substantial positive impact on the livelihoods of farmers, food security for all communities and the United Nation's Zero Hunger Challenge.

The expected results are well set and well known. Our endeavor, I am sure, will be successful if we give priority attention to an integrated and comprehensive approach involving both regional and international cooperation.

Strengthening the veterinary services will be strategic. In addition, we need to ensure the necessary complementarities with all other competencies and initiatives in the field of livestock development in general while tapping on the comparative advantages of all parties.

Let us reaffirm emphatically that the key players and beneficiaries should remain the herders, agro-pastoralists, value chain actors in markets, regions and countries. They should resolutely be consulted and engaged and remain at the center of our programmes.

I am confident that together with our implementing partners such as OIE, the African Union Panafrikan Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), our Member States and Regional Organizations, we can successfully finalize, endorse and implement the activities under joint programs or projects and ultimately achieve our overall goal of improving the contribution of livestock to food and nutrition security, economic growth and wealth creation in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, wherever PPR is going to be controlled and eradicated.

FAO, OIE and other partners are counting on the international community's full commitment and economic ownership of this programme. We will need to work together, across borders and with shared resources in order to eradicate this disease for ourselves and our children to come. Eradication of a disease such as PPR is a global public good.

Before concluding, it is also my great pleasure to recall the dynamic and exemplary cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and FAO. It is a great honor for the FAO to be among the key partners of the country, in particular, in the field of livestock development.

Thank you for your attention

Je vous remercie

Shukran.