

SPEECH BY DR. LADISLAUS KOMBA THE PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE *WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH* (OIE) TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR NATIONAL FOCAL PERSONS ON WILDLIFE DISEASES AT NAURA SPRINGS HOTEL, ARUSHA - 16TH MARCH 2010

Dr. Abdoulaye Bouna Niang, The OIE Regional Representative, Africa;

Ms Nuru Milao, The Regional Administrative Secretary for Arusha;

Dr. Faouzi Kechrid, The OIE Representative, Sub-Region Northern Africa;

Dr. Walter Masiga. The OIE Representative, Sub-Region Office for Eastern and Horn of Africa;

Dr William Olaho-Mukani, President OIE Regional Commission, Africa;

Dr. Bonaventure J. Mtei, The OIE Representative, Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa:

Invited Guests:

Workshop Facilitators; Workshop Participants; Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel greatly honoured to have the privilege to officiate the opening of this important workshop on the World Organization for Animal Health Training for national Focal Persons on Wildlife diseases in Anglophone Africa and Middle East Countries.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome all of you to Arusha and to this training workshop in particular. Special welcome is extended to most of you who have travelled all the way from outside Tanzania to come and attend this training workshop. You are most welcome and it is my hope that you will find the environment conducive for your training. *'Karibuni Sana'*.

Mr. Chairman,

I have been informed that this training workshop will mainly deal with providing OIE subject matter focal points on wildlife diseases the necessary information, updates and skills to better assume their responsibilities and obligations towards their National OIE Delegates in their respective countries and strengthen the interaction with OIE. This training workshop has Just come at the right time, when the world is being faced by an increase in emerging and resurging diseases due to global travel and trade; which has resulted into potential movements of diseases among humans, domesticated animals and wildlife populations.

Mr. Chairman,

The increase of emerging and resurging infectious diseases threatens not only humans, but also domesticated animals, wildlife and the overall biodiversity. Some years ago, diseases

were not considered as a threat to wildlife conservation. However, currently diseases are considered to be among the most threats to wildlife, and outbreaks are more likely to be catastrophic in smaller endangered species. The increase in disease threat to wildlife has been, particularly so, due to increased interaction of wildlife-livestock and humans. In order to address health challenges at the wildlife-livestock-human interface, there is a great need to strengthen the capacity for early detection, accurate diagnosis, reporting, control, mitigation and monitoring capabilities. I am delighted to note in the Workshop Program, that these components will be well addressed during the training workshop.

Mr. Chairman and workshop participants,

Currently there is a significant increase in wildlife-livestock-human interaction especially in Africa. This is mainly due to the increased of human population, a slight increase in livestock population and change in land use patterns; which all of them, have resulted in encroachment to protected areas and loss of wildlife habitats. In Tanzania, wildlife is loosing migratory routes, corridors and dispersal areas due to increased human activities. Apart from increased human-livestock- wildlife conflict, adjacent to protected areas, health challenges at the wildlife-livestock-human interface are expected to increase significantly in the near future, and we have to be prepared since the current health challenges we are experiencing are just a tip of an iceberg and are expected to be more in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

Climate change which is largely attributed by human activities since the beginning of the Industrial Era; increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere pose a serious threat to society and is having an unprecedented impact on the natural processes operating in the global climate system. Impacts of extreme drought will lead to lack of forage production and water resources, thus necessitating large scale movement of animals and wildlife in search of water and pastures. The large movements of livestock, wildlife and people will lead to increased interaction *over* meagre resources. hence increased transmission of diseases between livestock, wildlife and people as well as increased human-livestock-wildlife conflicts. Extreme floods on the other hand will lead to increased disease incidences and restricted movements of some livestock and wildlife in search of pastures. This calls for Governments to prepare and put forward coping strategies to adapt/mitigate against extreme climate events.

Workshop Participants,

This workshop has brought mostly focal points for wildlife diseases, I urge you to interact with domestic animal veterinarians as well as people from the human health sector at your work place. I am sure that almost everyone is aware Of the 'One World, One Health', or 'One World, One Medicine' concept. The concept is now a buzz word for addressing livestock-wildlifehuman health challenges globally, it provides a holistic approach to preventing epidemic/epizootic diseases and f or maintaining ecosystem integrity for the benefit of humans, and biodiversity that supports us all. I therefore emphasize on the need for multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration on diseases prevention, surveillance, monitoring, control, mitigation, information sharing as well as environmental conservation.

Mr. Chairman and Workshop Participants,

Surveillance of wildlife diseases is very expensive, especially for countries like Tanzania that contains high numbers of wildlife, with numerous protected areas located in various ecological zones of the country. For many years, wildlife health has not been fully integrated in the line Ministries for health; as a result, it has not been receiving adequate funding for wildlife disease surveillance. This phenomenon, coupled with inadequate human-resource capacity and other infrastructure, (transport, laboratory and equipment) has been a main cause of inadequate surveillance and reporting of disease outbreaks in wildlife. I commend OIE Regional Representation for Africa, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Southern Africa and OIE for capacity building and provision of standards on animal health, for the good job and urge member states to allocate adequate budget to livestock-wildlife diseases surveillance. This will make the subject focal points on wildlife diseases address their responsibilities adequately.

Mr. Chairman,

I understand that organizing a training workshop like this one is expensive. Therefore, allow me to thank OIE and other development partners for funding the workshop and workshop participants. Let me also thank members of the Organising Committee from OIE, OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Southern Africa and the local organising Committee in Tanzania for the successful organisation of the workshop.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude my speech by wishing all participants a fruitful workshop. For participants coming outside Tanzania, I welcome you to Tanzania; *the "Land of Kilimanjaro, Serengeti and Zanzibar"*, and more specifically to Arusha - "The Geneva of Africa", which is surrounded by a diversity of tourist attractions, within easy reach, including Arusha, Lake Manyara, Tarangire and Serengeti National Parks, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Oldupai Gorge, the cradle of human kind and also Meru and Kilimanjaro Mountains. Spare some days after the workshop to visit some of these fascinating tourist attractions in Tanzania. Indeed, you will find a home away from your home.

With these few remarks, I now have the pleasure to declare that the 'OIE TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR NATIONAL FOCAL PERSONS ON WILDLIFE DISEASES' is officially opened.