



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

Training Seminar for National Focal Points for Veterinary Drugs
23rd – 26 November 2010
Johannesburg - Republic of South Africa

Opening Remarks by Dr Bonaventure Mtei,
OIE Sub Regional Representative for Southern Africa

Programme Director, OIE Delegate for RSA

Hon Deputy Minister, Pieter Mulder

Dear Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first of all take this opportunity to convey regards to you Hon Minister from Dr Bernard Vallat, the Director General of the OIE and to all the participants here present at this training seminar on Veterinary Products. Through you Hon Minister, we thank the Government and the peoples of the Republic of South Africa for your hospitality and willingness to host this seminar.

Thank you Hon Minister for availing yourself to be here with us for the official opening and thank you all for accepting OIE's invitation to come for this training in your respective capacities.

Hon Minister,

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has a mandate from its 179 Member Countries to improve animal health worldwide. OIE is responsible for ensuring a transparent animal health situation to enhance animal agriculture for safe trade of animals and animal products. The OIE publishes international standards in all fields covered under its mandate, including animal welfare and consumer protection.

These missions of the OIE rely heavily on the National Veterinary Services of OIE Member Countries and Territories; hence OIE's increasing role in supporting and promoting quality and good governance of national veterinary services.

Hon Minister,

Gathered here are National Focal Points for Veterinary Products from the OIE Member countries of Africa, working under their respective OIE Delegates. We

are here in this training which will increase understanding of OIE's roles and mandates to improve technical inputs of African countries in the standard setting processes on veterinary products and biologicals that are used for animal health care, such as antibiotics, anti-parasites, anti-inflammatories, hormones and vaccines as well as reagents for laboratory tests.

We are privileged to have trainers from OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centers as well as experts from OIE HQs and from the Republic of South Africa to share with us their knowledge and skills on the subject matter.

This seminar will cover important topics contained in the *OIE Manuals of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for both Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals*. In addition it will cover ongoing developments and challenges related to manufacture, distribution and the use of veterinary products in animal production, including aquaculture.

In the folders you will find a message from the OIE DG with reference to the OIE Conference on Veterinary Products in Africa, held in Dakar, Sénégal, in March 2008. Veterinary products have to be registered before they can be marketed. OIE recognizes the Veterinary International Conference on Harmonization (VICH) as the only international body that adopts technical requirements and guidelines for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products. VICH guidelines are gaining sufficient recognition by the international community and for that reason, OIE wishes to collaborate to see if these guidelines can in future be submitted to the OIE World Assembly for adoption as OIE standards.

Hon Minister,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This seminar is taking place at a time when there are many challenges as well as opportunities regarding drugs registration and regulation particularly in less developed countries (LDCs) as opposed to Developed Countries (DCs). Key issues for effective drugs registration (be it for animals or humans) depends on relevant regulations with adequate administrative structures to ensure that scientific analyses of the products can be undertaken in a rigorous and efficient manner.

In this regard both political support and financial resources in terms of investments are critical. Issues of international politics such as intellectual property rights (TRIPs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) cannot be ignored.

Regulatory systems in Less Developed Countries face several problems including:

- ineffective legislations and or regulatory frameworks
- lack of manufacturing capacity;
- lack of scientific capacity to assess generic products;
- lack of human resources; and
- Inadequate funding for drug control activities.

OIE would like to continue supporting and expanding activities that are designed to assist less developed countries in addressing some of these challenges, together with other international organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and national Food and Drug Authorities (FDAs).

A coordinated approach at country, sub regional and continental level is the only solution to these problems. Regional cooperation is needed to ensure that scientific capacity is developed. In addition, development of regional manufacturing capacity appears to be the most likely way to explore economies of scale in order to meet demand and compliance to international standards for trade.

OIE is already involved in official validation of diagnostic assays as well as requirements governing veterinary products and especially vaccines.

This is necessary for prudent use of veterinary products and therefore one of the prerequisites for control procedures that need to be implemented.

Hon. Minister,

National OIE Focal Points on veterinary drugs from African countries meeting here today forms part of a worldwide network of experts that can help to bring about harmonization of policies in the field of veterinary products with the aim of not only improving national animal health policies but also consumer protection.

This training seminar is expected to raise awareness of OIE's roles and mandates as well as rights and responsibilities of OIE Delegates and focal points, good governance of Veterinary Services and the rights and obligations of OIE Members Countries in international trade.

Hon Minister,

Dear Participants,

I would like to end my remarks by sincerely thanking the European Union for financial support to organize this seminar through the ***Better Training for Safer Food*** in Africa Programme. Also to thank our partners GALVMed who have contributed to the organization of this workshop and to all of you once again thank you for coming. I hope you will find this training useful and your visit to South Africa enjoyable.

I thank you for your attention.

