

Mr. President, distinguished country representatives, participants, ladies and gentlemen, very good morning to you.

From the FAO Regional Office in Africa, I take the privilege to welcome you to the 11<sup>th</sup> Regional Steering Committee meeting of the GF-TADs in Nairobi.

We are meeting after a year, the 10<sup>th</sup> RSC meeting was held amid the pandemic, and we are very happy that the 11<sup>th</sup> RSC meeting could be held in a blended format, nearly two-thirds of the participants managed to join the meeting in person.

In this meeting, we have an opportunity to stocktaking the implementation status of recommendations of the 10<sup>th</sup> RSC meeting and identify the progress made and the gaps that challenged the accomplishment of the recommendations. Some issues are extremely urgent. For example, we only have less than eight years to achieve the global eradication of PPR. FAO and its partners together developed the necessary tools and strategies to implement the action plan; however, the PPR eradication requires investments both by the countries and by the international community such as international financial institutes and donors.

The challenges of transboundary diseases and those with zoonotic impacts are enormous and multifaceted. HPAI has now spread to many countries in Africa, RVF is expanding its geographic range. Rapid urbanization, ecosystem encroachment, economic growth, and climate change have impacts on disease patterns. The impacts of these are along with all aspects of lives, livelihood, movement, trade, and economy at scale, as the World has been witnessing the impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Hence, the actions for the prevention and control of TADs require multiple organizations and sectors to work together. Thus, the GF-TADs in the Africa Region, involving AU-IBAR, FAO, and WOAHA provides an appropriate platform for the coordination and collaboration, and provision of tools and strategies to assist member countries in the prevention and control of TADs.

FAO has already launched its strategic framework for 2022 - 2031 with the goal of achieving four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life where TADs and One Health cut across several betters. FAO Regional Office for Africa has identified One Health and the livestock system as one of the Regional Programme Priorities and will apply holistically progressive biosecurity management approaches for sustainable and resilient livestock systems. In addition, FAO has its strength in operationalizing work at the country level- the ECTAD has been assisting countries in building animal health institutional and workforce capacities for the prevention and control of TADs, and the implementation of the OH. The Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health has supported emergency response to several high-impact diseases in the continent, notwithstanding the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Ladies and gentlemen let us leverage the power of knowledge, skills, experience, and wisdom gathered in the 11 RSC meeting, stock take to progress, identify gaps, and develop actionable recommendations, which would pave the region to achieve the SDGs through the prevention and control of TADs and a stronger OH operationalization to prevent the next epidemics and pandemics.

Dear colleagues, please accept my apologies for not being able to join the meeting live because the schedule conflicted with a preset doctor's appointment. I will be present in all the sessions from tomorrow.

I wish you all a successful meeting. I hope the participants joining in person will have a pleasant stay in Nairobi and a safe journey back home.

Thank you and looking forward to working together.

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