



### **Salutation;**

Director of ceremonies/Moderator  
DG and DDGs  
WOAH Delegates  
WOAH Experts  
Representatives of International Organisations  
Fellow WOAHA Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. I greet you all today, at this momentous occasion of celebrating WOAHA centenary!! It is the perfect moment to reflect on a century of unwavering commitment to global animal health.

2. I thank the Organisers of this event for having given me this opportunity to speak at this important and landmark event – it's a real honour and privilege.

### **Mr. Moderator,**

2. Looking back, one can but wonder how trade of animals and their products was like before 1924, when WOAHA formerly known as OIE was established and took the centre stage of standard setting in animal health!

3. Presumably, animal movements (for trade and other reasons), would have been based on unilateral or at best bilateral agreements based on friendship and/or historical ties between countries, other than disease control. We heard stories of animals being transported in ships across the globe and spreading disease pathogens in the process.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

4. **Since its creation, WOAHA has made countless achievements**, and has positioned itself as an efficient and effective organisation that does a lot with minimal resources.

5. WOAHA has made big strides in animal health, thereby facilitating safe trade of animals and their products.

6. Since inception and together with member countries, WOAHA has increased her scope to cover allied topics such as animal welfare, biological threat reduction, and others, and broadened the scope of the definition of “animal”, to include aquaculture, apiculture and wildlife.

7. key to its success, has been the development of **science-based international standards** that foremost ensure **transparency in disease reporting and dissemination of animal health information**.

8. WOAHA Standards provides an **objective and scientific platform accessible to all**, for the regulation of animal disease control globally, to ensure consistency and equivalence.

9. Free access to these standards is a great benefit to countries, especially those with limited resources.

10. The **impact** has been improved levels of disease control globally, to the extent that Rinderpest was eradicated in 2011 after 87 years since inception of WOAHA.

11. Another significant **impact**, is enabling countries to create disease free zones or have the entire country disease freedom, as well as official control programmes, for a select number of diseases.

a. As an example, in Southern Africa, an arid region more suitable for animal than crop agriculture, countries have embraced WOAHA international standards to improve animal production;

b. consequently, 8/16 countries in this sub-region are free from one or more TADs or have free zones, while others have endorsed official control programme.

12. In addition to Standards setting the **Organisation strategically works with VS**, who are the custodians and dispensers of animal health services, to improve **governance and quality of veterinary services**.



13. The Organisation works with veterinary faculties (VEE) and veterinary councils (VSB) to ensure veterinarians and VPPs are well trained and regulated.

a. As evidence, currently we see more Universities making reference to WOAH Day 1 competencies as they revise their curricula, and formation of S, in countries where there used to be none.

b. This is particularly important in the training and regulation of VPPs who in Africa, are the majority in delivering veterinary services such as vaccination campaigns and disease surveillance; especially in remote and war-torn areas.

14. Further strengthening **governance and quality of veterinary services**, is through programmes like PVS evaluation and Twinning. *PVS is very popular and impactful in Africa – as I give this talk I'm on a PVS mission in Madagascar; after 2 recent ones in Zambia and DRC, and soon another to come in Mauritius.*

1. PVS reports can be used by countries to justify the request for more resources and restructure veterinary services, for optimal benefit – i.e. improve their VS.
2. Laboratory twinning has assisted some labs to be more capacitated in disease diagnosis, with some even becoming reference laboratories.

15. In addition, WOAH has offered targeted project support to some countries, including in;

- development of National Action Plans for relevant diseases;
- strengthening of Veterinary Services in Developing Countries (SVSDC),
- Rabies control in Namibia, and other countries;
- supporting capacities to combat AMR through strategic collaboration – notably with Quadripartite under the one-health framework;



- strengthening national and regional early detection systems for zoonotic wildlife diseases (Ebo-Sursy) in Africa, among others!

16. With these actions, we hope to build a healthier world for animals and humans alike.

### Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen;

15. **As personal testimony**, my WOAHA experience, dates back to the late 1990s, as an epidemiologist in the VS of Botswana – specifically in relation to the control and eradication of CBPP and FMD in northern Botswana;

16. With my team, we learned quickly that a good understanding and implementation of international standards is key to justifying the control and/or eradication of TADs, to Government and resource partners.

17. And that, the same can be used to negotiate trade in animal and animal products – most trading partners always want to know an exporting country's compliance levels to WOAHA Standards.

18. In the case of BW, historically the country had large areas with undefined FMD and other diseases status, and with the use of standards we managed to convert these into officially recognised free zones and started accessing markets for product from those areas.

19. This success augured well with policy makers, who saw the benefit and allocated more resources to disease control, to the present day – i.e. DVS animal health “business case” if you like.

21. For me the climax to my experiences with WOAHA, was presenting and defending a dossier submitted for FMD freedom to a panel of experts from WOAHA - the FMD and Other Epizootics Commission (now SCAD) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2004 – *a physical presentation those days - a tough but rewarding experience. (I can say more about it another day)*

22. The others were being nominated into the Ad Hoc Group on FMD evaluations (2006), where one had the opportunity to work with global experts on FMD and made lifelong friends and joined permanent network;



23. Of-course, the ultimate was being awarded WOAHA Meritorious honour at the General Session of 2013, in Paris, France... *an experience like none!! (once more a subject for another day!!)*

23. I therefore feel very honoured to finally working for this august Organisation (since 2014), and it continues to impress me, even as an insider now!

**Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

26. In **conclusion**, WOAHA has come a long way and has impacted animal disease control and related topic positively, as elaborated above.

27. The ongoing modernisation and digitalisation of the organisation will prepare it to face new challenges of the current era.

28. The constant review of the Organisations General Rules or Basic Text ensures that the Organisation is continuously aligned aligns it to modern day challenges and opportunities,

29. And this alignment is further strengthened by the adoption of new concepts like PPP, One Health, and others,

28. My humble vision for the future (*I hope others share it*), is that WOAHA continues to be a Global Leading Organization on animal health, and related topics, working together with key partner Organisations.

29. I end this note with well wishes to WOAHA and its staff, a Happy Centenary!!