



IGAD Ministerial Meeting on Pastoralism and Livestock Development

Speech by Dr. Baba Soumare - WOAHA Deputy Director General

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Excellencies Honourable Ministers, Representatives of international and regional Organisations, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like 1st – on behalf of our DG and my behalf - to express our thanks to the Chairperson of IGAD for inviting WOAHA's contribution to this conference.

WOAH would like to commend IGAD for convening this very important dialogue at a time when livestock mobility and safe trade are central to food security, livelihoods, and regional economies.

Transhumance is a tradition and a lifeline for millions of pastoralists across Africa. It sustains communities and supports regional economies. Yet, the movement of animals across borders brings challenges such as the spread of transboundary animal diseases, threats to public health, and disruptions to trade.

Founded in 1924 to address Cattle Plague, WOAHA is mandated by its 183 Members to act as the Global authority in charge of i) Setting science-based standards on AH and AW, ii) driving transparent sharing of disease

information, iii) Strengthening veterinary services and iv) promoting cooperation through collaborative frameworks

Our approach is rooted in science, transparency, and solidarity. We develop and update international standards that are recognised by the WTO under the SPS Agreement, standards that help our member countries apply sanitary measures to protect animal health and ensures commodities are safe for human consumption without creating unnecessary barriers to trade

So our mission is clear: by setting international standards and helping Members strengthen Veterinary systems, and gain disease free status, WOAHA facilitates safe and sustainable trade and movement of animals and animal products worldwide.

IGAD region faces unique challenges such as PPR or sheep and goat plague, Foot and Mouth Disease, Rift Valley Fever, and other transboundary diseases that may hinder the enormous potential of the livestock sector of this region. These diseases require coordinated action, implementation of harmonised legislations, and stronger veterinary systems.

Excellencies, allow me to refer to three Strategic Priorities at WOAHA that can accompany your objective to support free movement and transhumance of animals in the IGAD Region

1. **Strengthening Veterinary Services:** Veterinary Services are the backbone of safe trade. WOAHA supports countries through the PVS Pathway, capacity-building, digital learning platforms to enhance

competencies in surveillance, certification, and risk management but also in key Vet governance such Vet Legislation, Vet Education and PPP. Strong Veterinary Services mean capability to prevent and respond to any emerging health risk, stronger economies and healthier communities.

2. **Transparent sharing of disease information and Implementation of WOAAH Standards which** allows for harmonised requirements across IGAD, build trust, and unlock regional trade potential. These standards cover -among others - disease-free zones and compartments and animal welfare which is very important considering the long-distance movement of livestock within and across region with the Middle East.
3. **Transhumance routes and informal trade networks** are complex. WOAAH advocates for risk-based approaches, regional cooperation, and innovative solutions including harmonized veterinary certification systems to improve traceability, transparency.

By fostering cooperation such as through MoUs between Countries as highlighted this week, we can transform livestock movements into a driver of economic growth and food security.

Excellencies, let us seize this opportunity to work closely for safe movement of our animals and commit to:

- Investing in veterinary infrastructure and workforce development.
- Harmonising and implementing international animal health standards.
- Mobilising resources for disease prevention and emergency response.

Chairperson, before concluding I wish to announce that WOAHA is consolidating a framework on Animal movement, a new approach to address capacity building in animal movement control as a transversal competency of Veterinary Services and to develop guidelines to help regions implement their policies. IGAD Region will benefit from this initiative.

I also note with great pleasure your very good collaboration with our WOAHA SR Team through various support program to tackle trade-restricting TADs and zoonoses. I seize this opportunity to commend Dr Mapitse and his team for working hand-in-hand with you to address regional priorities

Last, I wish to reaffirm WOAHA strong commitment to continue working with IGAD, its Member States, and partners to strengthen resilience, reduce disease risks, and ensure that pastoral communities thrive in a secure and sustainable livestock economy.

Chairperson and Excellencies, Thank you.