

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

15 May 2023

The Regional Commission for Africa met by videoconference on 15 May 2023 at 1:00 p.m. CEST. The meeting was attended by up to 135 participants, including Delegates and observers from 35 Members of the Commission, and representatives from 15 international or regional organisations:

Members of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo (Rep. of the ~), Congo (Dem. Rep. of the ~), Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan (Rep. of), Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

International/regional organisations: AU-IBAR¹, AU-PANVAC², COMESA³, ECCAS (RAHC)⁴, ECOWAS (RAHC)⁵, EISMV⁶, GARC⁷, GALVmed⁸, ICIPE⁹, ICRC¹⁰, ILRI¹¹, INTERPOL, Mott MacDonald (Fleming Fund), The Brooke, WAEMU¹².

Observers: Chairpersons and members of the Biological Standards Commission and the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission

The meeting was chaired by Dr Honoré Robert N'lemba Mabela, President of the Regional Commission for Africa and Delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, accompanied by Dr Karim Tounkara, Regional Representative for Africa.

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- ¹ AU-IBAR: African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources
 - ² AU-PANVAC : African Union Panafrican Veterinary Vaccines Centre
 - ³ COMESA : Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
 - ⁴ ECCAS (RAHC): Economic Community of Central African States (Regional Animal Health Centre)
 - ⁵ ECOWAS (RAHC): Economic Community of West African States (Regional Animal Health Centre)
 - ⁶ EISMV : *Ecole Inter-Etats de Sciences et Médecine Vétérinaires*
 - ⁷ GARC : Global Alliance for Rabies Control
 - ⁸ GALVmed : Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines
 - ⁹ ICIPE: International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology
 - ¹⁰ ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
 - ¹¹ ILRI : International Livestock Research Institute
 - ¹² WAEMU: West African Economic and Monetary Union

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Agenda, described in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted.

2. Outcomes of the 25th Conference of the Regional Commission for Africa held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 21 to 24 February 2023

Dr Albertina Shilongo, Vice President of the of the Regional Commission for Africa and Delegate for Namibia, briefly described the main conclusions from the topics presented and discussed during the 25th Conference of the Regional Commission which was attended by a total of 113 participants, comprising WOAHA Delegates and representatives of 43 Members of the Region and senior officers from 15 regional, international, and national organisations and institutions.

She highlighted, among others: I) WOAHA Delegates are key in the role of advocating with high level authorities and stakeholders on the importance of WOAHA mission and the need to invest in Veterinary Services; II) PPR and Rabies (main technical items of the conference) discussions highlighted that buy-in and commitment from Members including from policymakers and authorities at national and also at subregional levels are key to achieve eradication; III) Members are encouraged to make efforts to continue their commitment to disease surveillance and to improve notification of diseases in compliance with the *Terrestrial Code* so to ensure prevention and control of diseases of high impact in the Region; IV) Good understanding of the socio-economic impacts of transboundary animal disease is key in supporting the investment case for risk management through implementation of WOAHA's international standards; V) It is key for Members to ensure leadership at national level so that the animal health sector be well involved in the One Health agenda, responsibilities regarding One Health shared well between the relevant parties, and contribution of the Veterinary Services to the global health be well recognised by other relevant actors and in particular by the human health counterparts; VI) WOAHA has provided and will continue to support with the necessary tools for Members to adapt them at national level; VII) A coordinated and harmonised approach at regional and subregional levels is crucial for diseases control, VIII) Zoonoses and other threats at the livestock-wildlife-human interface still remains a priority for Africa in light of national, regional, and global health security.

Finally, she reminded the Delegates that two recommendations regarding the two technical items of the Conference (TI 1: Eradication of peste des petits ruminants (PPR), and TI 2: Elimination of dog-transmitted human rabies from Africa by 2030 - national strategies, legal frameworks, tools to track progress) were adopted by the Regional Commission. Both recommendations will be presented to the World Assembly for endorsement.

3. Confirmation of the venue of the 26th Conference of the Regional Commission for Africa to be held in February 2025

Dr Alemayehu Mekonnen, on behalf of Dr Fikru Regassa Gari, Delegate of Ethiopia, reiterated his country's offer to host the 26th Conference of the Regional Commission for Africa in February 2025. Exact dates will be defined at a later stage in consultation with WOAHA Director General.

4. Proposal of a Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 26th Conference of the Regional Commission for Africa

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (with questionnaire to Members) for inclusion in the agenda of the 26th Conference of the Regional Commission for Africa:

“Control and eradication of CBPP in Africa: Challenges and Strategies for a CBPP Free Africa”

5. Proposal of three strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by WOAHA through various means (Scientific Review, Newsletter, scientific paper, technical item or during a specific activity/meeting)

The Regional Commission proposed the following three strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by the WOAHA through various means:

1. "Ageing veterinary profession workforce, workforce development, community-based animal health workers"
2. "Climate change, green-house gas emissions from livestock"
3. "Concept of Veterinary Services as essential services during disasters or lockdowns"

6. Information regarding the change of name of the Subregional Representation for Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa

Dr Jean-Phillipe Dop, WOAHA Deputy Director General, Institutional Affairs and Regional Activities, explained the process regarding the proposal to be presented via a resolution for adoption by the World Assembly of Delegates, to change the name of the Subregional Representation in Kenya currently referred as "Sub-Regional Representation for Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa" to be named "Sub-Regional Representation for Eastern Africa". This is to align the name of the representation with its geographical scope.

7. Presentation by AU-IBAR: Regional perspective for the control of animal diseases

Dr Nick Nwankpa, the acting Director of AU-IBAR, introduced the regional perspective for the control of animal diseases by highlighting the key animal health strategies and guiding frameworks in the Africa Region. The animal health programmes highlighted by Dr Nwankpa included the development of the Pan African PPR Eradication Programme with a resource mobilisation framework that assigns the contribution of Members at 30%, the contribution of the European Union at 30% and other development partners at 40% based on Nairobi Declaration and aligning it with the PPR Global Eradication Programme Blueprint. Arising from the Pan African PPR Eradication Programme, an "Action Document for EU support to the Eradication of PPR (Peste des Petits Ruminants) from Africa" has been developed and submitted for funding to the EU with AU-PANVAC, WOAHA and FAO as partners. Other Africa Region activities highlighted include a focus on disease-specific issues regarding Rabies, African Swine Fever, and Avian influenza along with activities on the thematic areas of animal welfare, antimicrobial resistance, animal health to facilitate trade, support to veterinary legislation, and One Health.

Finally, Dr Nwankpa mentioned the importance of coordination and harmonisation of regional animal health activities in the framework of the GF-TADs and RAHNS which AU-IBAR has been supporting.

8. Presentation by AU-PANVAC: Contribution of AU-PANVAC in the control of animal diseases

Dr Charles Bodjo, from AU-PANVAC, presented AU-PANVAC work as WOAHA Collaborating Centre for the quality control of veterinary vaccines and a FAO reference centre for technical assistance in quality control of veterinary vaccines. He reminded the participants of the institution's core mandate highlighting, among others, the provision of international independent quality control of veterinary vaccines produced or imported into Africa, and the production of essential diagnostic services like the PPR ELISA kit, diagnostic and laboratory kits for CCPP and CCPP vaccine. In addition to provision of quality testing of veterinary vaccines, AU-PANVAC also supports the capacity building for laboratories to improve their quality of vaccines, the training on shipment of infectious material, and the one health activities through provision of COVID-19 testing services.

He also mentioned that, following the site inspection by the Rinderpest Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), it was recommended in January 2023, to extend the designation of AU-PANVAC to an FAO-WOAH Rinderpest Holding Facility Categories A and B until 31 May 2026. It was clarified that AU-PANVAC is not designated as a Rinderpest sequestration centre but a holding facility. Additionally, he informed that, considering bio-risk management is of high priority for AU-PANVAC, with the support of US-DTRA and SANDIA, its staff have been trained in Bio-Risk management.

He concluded mentioning that to meet the growing demand, the design of a new laboratory complex began in 2018 and is expected to be completed in August 2023 thanks to the support of DTRA.

9. The Pandemic Fund

Ms. Tagliaro, Head of WOAHA's Engagement & Investment Department, presented the Fund for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (Pandemic Fund). She started her presentation by emphasising the critical role Veterinary Services play in preventing future pandemics through an application of the One Health approach. She underscored the cost benefit of investing in prevention, with the estimated annual cost of prevention representing merely 30% of the cost of preparedness, corresponding to less than 1% of the cost of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She introduced the Pandemic Fund including its Theory of Change, structure, and operating processes. She centered her presentation on first call for expressions of interest and associated call for proposals, reminding the Commission of the priority topics (surveillance and early warning, laboratory systems, One Health workforces capacity development), submission requirements and deadlines. She invited participants to access the Pandemic Fund [website](#) for more information.

10. Public-Private Partnerships in the veterinary domain in Africa

Dr Rahul Srivastava from WOAAH Capacity Building Department stated that Public-private partnership (PPP) is a joint approach in which the public and private sectors agree on responsibilities and share resources and risks to achieve common objectives that sustainably deliver benefits.

He said that in consideration of the essential and often under-utilised role of PPP in the veterinary domain, WOAAH has developed several tools, most notably the PPP Handbook, PPP e-learning courses and PPP Database, to accompany both public and private stakeholders at national, regional or global levels in the establishment of impactful and sustainable partnerships.

Finally he mentioned that WOAAH encourages the participation of public and private stakeholders in its main activities, among which are standard setting and implementation guidelines, training, emergency preparedness and response guidance, etc. The enabling environment for the development, governance, impact, and sustainability of PPP can be considered throughout the PVS Pathway Cycle, at the Evaluation stage (Evaluation and Evaluation Follow-Up missions), during the planning stage (Gap Analysis, Strategic Planning) and through specific PVS Targeted Support activities. Therefore, WOAAH has developed PPP Targeted Support as a National Workshop to build partnership capacities of relevant Public and Private stakeholders. PPP mission can be requested by countries who had implemented a PVS evaluation, follow-up or Gap analysis in the last five years. This support is developed during face-to-face national workshops where participants analyse i) enabling factors for PPP implementation, ii) identification of PPP type to be established, iii) resources for planning and implement the PPP type chosen and iv) monitoring and evaluation of the PPP.

Ms. Jennifer Lasley, from the Capacity Building Department, announced briefly the PVS Information System which is under development and targeted for global launch at the 100th anniversary which will be commemorated during the 2024 General Session. She underlined the benefits for members expected with the new system and encouraged Delegates to visit the PVS Kiosk during the General Session.

Dr Honoré Robert N'lemba Mabela thanked the Delegates who were no longer Delegates for their valuable services and contributions to the Organisation and welcomed the new Delegates appointed since 2022 annual meeting. He paid homage to the Delegate of Egypt, Prof. Abdelhakim Mahmoud Mohamed Ali, who passed away in the late 2022.

CLOSED SESSION FOR DELEGATES ONLY

11. Financial Summary Report (related SG financial documents)

Mr Xavier Pairault, WOAAH Director of Administration, briefly explained the rationale behind the proposal of increasing the statutory contributions rates by 15% for 2024. His presentation was a summary of the financial report available on the GS website.

He reminded the meeting that 1) discussions regarding the financial sustainability of WOAAH regular budget started during the Council meeting in September 2021 considering mainly the impact of the digitalisation as well as the growing number and types of activities supported by WOAAH in order to respond to its Member's needs; 2) A Council special meeting held in December 2021 that supported the proposal presented and finally accepted by the Assembly in 2022 for increasing the statutory contributions of 30% over 2023 – 2025 period, with a 15% increase adopted for 2023 and a 7.5% foreseen increase for 2024 and 2025; 3) An explanatory note was shared with Delegates explaining the rationale behind the increase proposed in 2022. Such rational remains relevant for 2023 with a key additional issue, the drastic deterioration of the economic situation.

The Director of Administration explained that since the adoption of resolution 15/2018, OECD Consumer price index of the year N-1 is taken into account for the contribution of the year N+1. Therefore 2024 minimum increase would be +9,6% at least.

Comparing the OECD-Total CPI in the last year's period against the annual increase of statutory contributions, it is evident that WOAAH increase rates since 2019 had been effectively extremely low (= - 0,3%).

Referring to WOAAH's 2024 Budgeted Work Programme preparation, Mr Pairault explained that the impact of high inflation across all goods and services, coupled with the energy crisis, has already taken a toll on WOAAH's capacity to deliver activities. The inflation rate will nullify and consume the positive gains from the increased statutory contributions. Consequently, at the February 2023 meeting, the Council unanimously agreed to request the Membership to increase 2024 statutory contributions by 15% to cushion the impact of inflation. Such increase leads to a 9.6% of effective increase over a 6-year period and is used to cover fixed and recurring costs as well as key investments such as the digital transformation, status recognition activities and Regional Offices functioning.

The Director of Administration concluded highlighting that statutory and extraordinary contributions through the Regular Budget are a fundamental source of funding and are essential for the functioning of the Organisation. It provides a level of funding reliability and allows resources to be assigned and aligned with the activities and strategic plans of the Organisation. They are essential for WOAAH's financial sustainability.

12. Facilitated access to the voting platform

Mr Rodney De Souza, Head of WOAAH Legal Affairs Unit, reminded Delegates that, in the context of the 90th General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates voting on some resolutions and partial elections will be held online using two voting platforms, Platform 1 to vote for some resolutions in advance, and Platform 2 to vote during the partial elections.

Similar to 2022, these two platforms will be managed by the service provider 'UK Engage'. However, unlike the previous year, the voting platforms will only be accessible through the Delegate Portal. Delegates received a message from VotingSupport@woah.org with such information and how to access the platforms.

Within the Delegate Portal, a link will be displayed for each of the voting platforms. Each link is unique and will be automatically authenticated.

Delegates with no right to vote will not see platform 1 but it is key for them to login for platform 2 for partial elections and even if they cannot vote it is important to ensure the quorum.

Early votes for resolutions must be cast online (Platform 1) from 15 May to 22 May (23:59 CEST).

Partial election voting will be online (Platform 2) and will take place on Thursday 25 May at 11:30 CEST at the General Session venue. Only Delegates present in the room will be able to vote.

Delegates will be able to access the links by using their own electronic devices.

Delegates need to validate the access to the Delegates Portal following instructions sent through an automatically generated email from 'Microsoft Invitations on behalf of the WOAHP'. This email contains information on how to validate access to the Delegate Portal.

Delegates were encouraged to validate their access to the Portal as soon as possible to ensure having access to the online voting platforms.

Dr Roland Xolani Dlamini, Delegate of Eswatini, reminded all fellow Delegates about the importance of paying and being up to date on their statutory contributions in order to be able to vote which will be more critical in 2024, and Dr Henrique Gimi, Delegate of Angola, requested the addition of Spanish as a third working language for the Africa Region, in order to benefit non-English and non-French speaking Members.

13. Closing

The meeting officially ended at 4.10 pm.

Dr Honoré Robert N'lemba Mabela, thanked all for their active participation, and also the interpreters and technical people who organised the meeting successfully.

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