

Conference of the Regional Commission for Middle East (November 2021)

OIE DG intervention : Challenges for the implementation of the 7th OIE Strategic Plan in the post-pandemic world of COVID-19

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Dear participants, the purpose of my talk today aims to share with you some preliminary thoughts on the challenges for the implementation of the 7th OIE Strategic Plan you recently adopted.

Let me firstly remind that the newly adopted OIE Strategic Plan is significantly different from the previous ones because

- the development process was more inclusive, involving member countries, partners and OIE staff. At the previous regional conference or via the electronic consultation, you expressed your ideas, your suggestions, your expectations; we have carefully considered and included them.
- This SP promotes a more engaging organization with explicitly stated values and guiding principles; I think it is more necessary than ever to remember that, including for our staff after so many months out of the office.
- and above all, this 7th plan aims to create a new momentum to continue building an Organization ready to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

It is a less technical plan than the previous ones so that it is also audible by ministers, decision-makers, partners, including resources partners. I am very pleased that the Council and the Assembly have supported this approach because it is in line with our investment in political forums such as the G7, the G20 or other high-level ministerial meetings. The final declaration of the G20 Health Ministers adopted in Rome in September is an additional recognition of the OIE key role on the international scene when talking about One Health and related matters. More important, that has been reiterated by the Leaders of the G20 at their meeting held few days ago in Italy; let me to quote a paragraph of the final declaration, *"We are committed to pursue a One Health approach at global, regional, national and local levels. To this end, we will enhance global*

*surveillance, early detection and early warning systems, under the coordinating role of the WHO, FAO, OIE and UNEP, and address risks emerging from the human-animal-environment interface, particularly the emergence of zoonotic diseases, while pursuing global efforts to fight antimicrobial resistance, while ensuring access to antimicrobials and their prudent stewardship, and continuing to address other critical issues, “....*

Since the creation of the Organisation, we are recognized by Ministers of Agriculture and stakeholders for our importance for trade purpose. We are more and more recognized by the Ministers of Health, Ministers of Finances and Global Leaders as key partner in building global health governance. It is not always easily compatible, but it is our challenge to reconcile these two aspects of our mandate.

When writing the 7th Strategic Plan draft, I never expected that its implementation would be needed as urgently as the COVID-19 crisis is forcing us to do now.

Let me remind the 5 main objectives :

- Scientific expertise
- Data strategy, in particular through a digital transformation
- Response to the member countries
- Collaboration with partners
- Efficiency, agility thanks to modern processes and tools

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted once again the need of more scientific expertise, in particular for assessing risks at the Human/Animal/Environment interface as well as the importance of operational partnerships. In addition, the need of exchanging more data / more sophisticated data with more partners, as well as the new modalities of working (namely teleworking for the staff and virtual meetings with you) reinforce the relevance of our engagement in a digital transformation of the Organisation.

Thus, our 7th Strategic Plan is the one we need. However, the prioritization of these 5 strategic objectives – or in other words, the speed of their respective implementation - will be different from what we thought 18 months ago.

In my view, undoubtedly the digital transformation is the most urgent one. The success of the implementation of 4 other objectives is strongly dependent on our ability to accelerate this transformation. An effective data management based on a well-structured architecture is a big challenge as it is not an area where we are ahead of the game !

We need to invest in human resources having the appropriate skills as well as funding the projects with enough budget because we must succeed and succeed quickly.

At the same time, the other objectives should also be implemented:

- Enlarging and strength our domain of expertise in wildlife health, as an additional component of our engagement in the Tripartite + partnership.
- The partnership strategy must also be adjusted : some must be revitalized in particular with organisations involved in wildlife or environmental issues. Our partnership with WHO must also be strengthened as well as our activities under the One Health Concept. That is key for the coming discussions on a future global governance of the sanitary crisis. The discussion at the coming extraordinary WHO Assembly, end November, could lead to the adoption of a resolution calling for the preparation of an international Treaty on pandemics. I recently shared with you a briefing to provide information on the treaty and to encourage you to mobilize your Ministers and other relevant Ministers involved in the treaty's negotiation so that the adequate attention be paid to animal sector.  
We have to be active so that the contribution of the Veterinary Services be well taken into consideration.
- Lastly but not least, with regard to the OIE itself, our processes must be modernized, to make our organisation flexible and resilient.

In the meantime, the regular activities must be delivered in order to provide our Members with the expected services. I have an example in mind: with the revision of the chapter on avian influenza, we will receive more applications for self-declarations of free status. However, the team of the Status Dpt has not been expanded and no additional budget has been considered to absorb this activity.

For such reasons, we need to review the construction of the budget: consequently to decisions of the Assembly, we cannot add new activities without

considering the budgetary impact. The Council members has been provided with more information at its September meeting because the budgetary constraints may impose choices in priorities.

Dear Delegates, the OIE cannot continue to deliver the expected services and activities, nor strengthen the internal robustness of the organization, when the statutory contributions have not increased for 5 years.

Considering this context, we currently are finalizing proposals to be presented to the Council at its extraordinary meeting scheduled for early December. The next 2022 General Session will be the appropriate forum to further exchange with you on it.

I think I am out of time - so I will stop, but I am ready to answer any questions you may have.