

BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST AGRO-CRIME AND AGRO-TERRORISM

Middle East Presentation Summary, 5 January 2022

MEETING PURPOSE

The meeting aimed to present the joint OIE-FAO-INTERPOL "Building Resilience Against Agro-Crime and Agro-Terrorism Project" to countries in the Middle East and to discuss the issues of agro-crime and agro-terrorism in the region.

OPENING

Dr Ghazi Yehia, OIE, welcomed the participants and highlighted how the COVID-19 Pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in society to biological emergencies (including animal health) and those with deliberate intent. The all-hazards approach and multi-sectoral cooperation are important for contingency planning and the Project is an opportunity for countries in the Middle East to share experiences and learn from one another.

Mr Adrien Sivignon, INTERPOL, described the mandate of INTERPOL in sharing criminal intelligence between its Members and to offer technical and operational support, including through projects. INTERPOL actively promotes an interagency approach including the need for strong partnerships between Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services. This is reflected by the efforts between the OIE and INTERPOL to agree a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their cooperation.

Dr Nir Tenenbaum, FAO, explained the innovative approach to the Project by bringing together the three partnered organisations for the first time to jointly address terrorism and crime affecting animal health and welfare. He also emphasised the importance of having focal points in countries to assist in the organisation of activities of the Project.



PROJECT PRESENTATION

Dr Daniel Donachie (OIE), Dr Fanny Ewann (INTERPOL), Dr Frederic Poudevigne (FAO) described the Project and its aim to foster cooperation and collaboration between Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services to build resilience against animal health emergencies arising from agro-crime and agro-terrorism. The Project includes international and regionally targeted activities including in the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia.

In the animal health context, agro-crime is any offence impacting animals, the inputs used to raise them, or their products that is classified as a crime as per a country's civil and penal codes and is motivated by personal and/or financial gain whereas agro-terrorism is a form of agro-crime which aims to further political or social objectives through the intentional release of biological agents or toxins for the purpose of harming or killing animals with the intent to intimidate or coerce a government or civilian population. This Project aims to **assess** the current status of emergency preparedness for agro-crime and agro-terrorism, prepare and refine tools that consider the interface between animal health and security, deliver **training** in emergency management and hold **simulation exercises** and **communicate** on the risks of agro-crime and agro-terrorism.

DISCUSSION AND FOLLOW-UP

The discussion highlighted the issue of the smuggling of animals and animal products and the risk it poses of bringing new diseases into countries. Smuggling is difficult to control and requires multi-agency efforts to tackle the issue. In addition many agro-crimes committed are not intentional and are due to ignorance and lack of knowledge rather than malicious intents and thus there is a need to raise awareness on what constitutes animal health and welfare crimes at national level. Interest was expressed to learn from other countries in preventing and responding to agro-crime, agro-terrorism acts and also the experiences of countries in cross-government approaches in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

To follow-up, the Project presentation, concept note, and meeting summary were shared with participants and countries interested in participating in the Project were requested to nominate a **contact point** (if they have not did so already) from both the Veterinary Authority and Law Enforcement to facilitate planning of activities. INTERPOL is also able to offer assistance to countries in sourcing Law Enforcement nominations through INTERPOL National Central Bureaus.

PARTICIPANTS

OIE, INTERPOL, FAO

Egypt- General Organization for Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation,

Iraq- Veterinary Directorate

Jordan- Veterinary and Animal Health Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and the Directorate of Public Security/Royal Department of Environmental Protection

Lebanon- Animal Resources Department, Ministry of Agriculture and the Intelligence Department, Internal Security Forces