



Note to Members

ONE HEALTH
The Role of National Veterinary Services and The World Organisation for Animal Health

July 2022

This note provides Members with information on negotiations currently underway at the international level that directly concern national Veterinary Services which require your attention, coordination, and engagement at the national, regional and global levels.

This note builds upon the briefing note sent to all Members on 26 October 2021 titled “*Project of International Treaty for Pandemic Preparedness and Response*” (Appendix 1) and aligns with several recommendations included in WOAHA Resolution n.29/2022 “*Contribution of the World Organisation for Animal Health and its Members to the negotiations related to an international instrument for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response*” (Appendix 2) and WOAHA Resolution N.31/2021 “*How can the World Organisation for Animal Health support Veterinary Services to achieve One Health resilience*” (Appendix 3) adopted by the Assembly in May 2021.

More specifically, the note provides Members with information on the Organisation’s position on the below three items:

- 1) **The Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action**, including operationalisation and country engagement
- 2) **The 75th specific World Health Assembly**, including negotiations pertaining to the WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.
- 3) **The G20 Joint Health and Finance Taskforce** and the establishment of a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR) under the management of the World Bank.

Lastly, this note **(4) shares key messages that can be used by Members** in their discussions at national and international level relating to the above interconnected issues.

As discussed during our last Assembly, the global public health governance is at a critical crossroad, with important decisions being made which will impact Veterinary Services for tomorrow and the far future. We must stand together as an Organisation, as a sector and with our partners to advocate that Veterinary Services are global public goods and that the animal health sector plays a critical role in pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The application of the One Health approach under the leadership of the Quadripartite will achieve a world better able to prevent, predict, detect, and respond to health threats and improve the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment while contributing to sustainable development.

Should the Delegates require any additional information, please contact: Dr Chadia Wannous, WOAHA One Health Senior Specialist at c.wannous@woah.org.

1. Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) - Working together for the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment

In response to the recognised need for the Quadripartite (WHO, UNEP, FAO, and WOA) to support their Members in implementing a One Health approach, the Quadripartite agreed at the 27th Annual Executive Meeting in 2021 to jointly develop a strategy and an action plan to prevent future zoonotic pandemics through the One Health approach. This effort builds on WOA 7th Strategic Plan, which recommends that the Organisation “broaden its positions on animal health and welfare issues, within the remit of its resources and mandate. In addition to veterinary perspectives, it seeks to embrace a more inclusive approach that considers insights from other disciplines”. Such positions are well captured in the 2021 technical item aiming to improve One Health resilience at the global level and for its Members and accompanying Resolution No. 31. These documents explicitly underscore the need to promote the role of Veterinary Services and animal health sector as an essential component of One Health resilience.

Similarly, in 2021, the 74th World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA74.7 titled ‘*Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies*’ “to build on and strengthen the existing cooperation among the Quadripartite to develop options, for consideration by their respective governing bodies, including establishing a common strategy on One Health, including a joint work plan on One Health to improve prevention, monitoring, detection, control and containment of zoonotic disease outbreaks”.

In the past year, the Quadripartite worked closely to develop the [One Health Joint Plan of Action \(OH JPA\)](#), as a blueprint for action to mainstream One Health and to guide the work of the four organizations to operationalize One Health approach at global, regional and country level. The Plan builds on, complements, and adds value to existing global and regional One Health and coordination initiatives aiming at strengthening capacity to address complex multidimensional health risks with more resilient health systems at all levels.

The OH JPA is guided by a Theory of Change and makes use of One Health principles to strengthen collaboration, communication, capacity building, and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-plant-environment interface. To achieve sustainable health and food systems, reduced global health threats and improved ecosystem management, the OH JPA is structured around the following six interdependent Action Tracks: (1) enhancing One Health capacities to strengthen health systems; (2) reducing the risks from emerging and re-emerging zoonotic epidemics and pandemics; (3) controlling and eliminating endemic zoonotic, neglected tropical and vector borne diseases; (4) strengthening the assessment and management of food safety risks; (5) curbing the silent pandemic of antimicrobial resistance (AMR); and, (6) integrating the environment into One Health. Considering the strategic importance of capacity building, as well as its longstanding experience regarding the PVS pathway and Joint External Evaluation with WHO, WOA lead the drafting of Action Track1.

The OH JPA was developed through a participatory and inclusive process and benefitted from the expertise and review of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP). Information sessions and consultations were organised with Members to introduce the Plan and get feedback have been carried over May to June 2022. The revised version of the OH JPA will be finalised and launched by the end of July 2022. The upcoming challenge will be to implement the Plan and translate the Quadripartite’s work to the country level to support our Members.

To overcome these challenges,

- I. An implementation framework will be developed to operationalise the OH JPA, supported by methodological concept tools and measurement instruments, to guide successful implementation of evidence into practice in line with the proposed pathways of change.
- II. Efforts will be made to empower and strengthen Regional Coordination Mechanisms to drive the development of pilot projects in full consultation with countries.
- III. Funding and financing mechanisms will be explored to enable operationalisation of the OH JPA and to coordinate activities, and could include national budget lines, international financial sources or collective and in-kind resources. The OH-JPA is still to be costed, having in mind that it will have to be articulated and compared with the annual global need for Prevention Preparedness and Response is already estimated around \$31 Billion by WHO and the World Bank, with a current gap around \$10,5 Billion (see below, G20 Joint Health and Finance Taskforce).
- IV. Fostering coalitions with other partners for advocacy and mobilization through a whole of society approach to ensure inclusivity and so that voices of all the stakeholders are heard.

2. The 75th Specific World Health Assembly (WHA) and the negotiations pertaining to the establishment of an international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

Following the formation of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB)¹ to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, during the 2022 WHA, a draft consolidated outline document of the substantive elements was presented as a basis for consideration and discussion. Presentations were made by the WHO Secretariat to summarize the outcomes of the INB digital platform (online tool and open-ended submissions), as well as to summarize the report by the Director-General to the Assembly on the need to strengthen the global architecture for health emergency preparedness and response ([Document A75/17](#)). Member States highlighted that any outcome instrument should complement and be aligned with existing instruments within WHO and that efforts should be made to synchronize the work of the INB and the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005).

The INB Bureau is further developing the draft annotated outline based on inputs received from countries and stakeholders with a view to providing a **working draft expected by 11 July 2022**. The second INB meeting will be held on **18-22 July 2022** and will be publicly webcast, noting that a private session could be organised if necessary.

Although One Health appears as one of the "guiding principles" of the future agreement, this is insufficient. The white paper recently issued by the INB does not provide additional clarity nor visibility for One Health. Moreover, the Quadripartite is merely considered as one stakeholder among others, which does always not have the authority to intervene at INB meetings.

During the INB stakeholder consultation which took place on 15 June 2022, the WOHAI issued the following statement:

- **Proposes a specific role for the Quadripartite in the 'design phase' of the instrument and that a specific shared governance arrangements be established among the four organisations to enable the implementation of the new instrument.**
- Advocate that any measures related to prevention should be clearly distinct from measures related to preparedness to respond. Prevention focuses on putting into place pre-emptive measures to stop spillovers of zoonotic diseases from animals to humans in the first place. Among others, this includes:
 - Changing human behavior to reduce exposure to and encroachment into the habitat of wildlife.
 - Reducing risks along food system value chains.
 - Developing and implement stronger biosecurity measures;
 - Strengthening animal and wildlife health services; and
 - Adopting, mainstreaming and implementing the One Health approach.
- **The One Health approach should be the foundation of the instrument** as it is a whole of society approach which catalyses the multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach needed to tackle health threats at the human-animal-environment interface. **Moreover, One Health should also be integrated into each pillar of the instrument: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.**
- **The OH approach will foster linkages with the global environmental and development changes that drive disease emergence and spread.** These include land use change, unsustainable agricultural production and intensification, large scale deforestation, and biodiversity loss, among other drivers. Such drivers threaten ecosystem integrity and functions and continue to accelerate increased health risks at the human-animal-plant-environment interface, disproportionately affecting most vulnerable communities.
- The Quadripartite (FAO, UNEP, WHO, and WOHAI) has longstanding track record of efficient collaborative work to address these risks in partnership with the respective Memberships.

¹ The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) nominated members of the Bureau by region: Africa – Ms Precious Matsoso (South Africa), Americas – Ambassador Tovar da Silva Nunes (Brazil), Middle East – Mr Ahmed Salama Soliman (Egypt), Europe – Mr Roland Driece (the Netherlands), South East Asia – Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien (Thailand) and Western Pacific region – Mr Kazuho Taguchi (Japan). South Africa and Netherland representatives act as the co-chairs of the Bureau.

- **Implementing the OH Joint plan of Action developed by the Quadripartite is crucial and urgent** and offers to address health concerns at the human-animal-plant-environment interface, while promoting health for all holistically in the long term.

Our feeling is that WHO doesn't want to make a specific case of the Quadripartite and WOAHA, considered as regular stakeholders in the negotiation process which is led first by Member countries. The strong political support and advocacy efforts of WOAHA Members are therefore needed to echo above priorities and the future Group of Friends of One Health called for by the World Assembly of National Delegates to the OIE through WOAHA Resolution n.29/2022 will ensure a more equitable balance of all health sectors – including animal health - in the negotiation processes. A meeting with potential members of the Group of Friends of One Health to lay the foundations for this group was organized in Geneva on 8 July 2022 of interested countries to advance this proposal (Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, European Commission, among others). Members are invited to inform WOAHA about their interest to join this Group and to inform their permanent Representation for WHO in Geneva.

3. G20 Joint Health and Finance Taskforce and establishment of a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for PPR

Under the Italian presidency in 2021, G20 Members committed to build on lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis and to increase investments to advance pandemic prevention and response in line with the comprehensive One Health approach considering work of the Quadripartite. G20 members also underscored the need to improve dialogue and coordination between global health and finance policymakers, multilateral health and financial institutions, and reinforce a multilateral approach for financing based on multisectoral collaboration domestically and internationally.

To foster this dialogue, G20 Finance and Health Ministers met for a first joint meeting on 29 October 2021 and established through a [communiqué](#) a joint Finance and Health Task force to: (i) enhance dialogue and global cooperation on issues relating to pandemic PPR, (2) promote the exchange of experiences and best practices, (3) develop coordination arrangements between Finance and Health Ministries, (4) promote collective action, assessing and addressing health emergencies with cross-border impact, and (5) encouraging effective stewardship of resources for pandemic PPR, while adopting a One Health approach.

To date, the joint task force has met virtually on four occasions (1 December 2021; 26 January 2022; 1 April 2022; 31 May 2022) and has principally focused dialogue on the joint World Bank-WHO paper on PPR financing needs and gaps estimating that external financing amounting to an additional \$10.5 billion per year, over the next five years, is needed for investments at the country, regional and global level to strengthen the capacity of low-income and middle-income countries. Linked to this, there was emerging consensus within the G20 and beyond, that a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) hosted by the World Bank would be the most fit-for purpose vehicle to fill critical PPR financing gaps. Since then, a [white paper](#) has been developed and shared for a very brief period for consultation. Similarly, to the negotiations on the pandemic instrument, the FIF merely recognises that investments at the country level align with One Health principles.

At recent meetings, WOAHA has issued the following messages:

- On behalf of its 182 Members, WOAHA is the leading international Organisation for animal health and zoonoses. Established by international treaty in 1924, the Organisation predates and is therefore not part of the UN System. We appeal to the FIF's principle of inclusiveness, and request that the WOAHA be considered as:
 - A Member of the Advisory Panel
 - An implementing entity
 - A source of scientific and technical expertise to advise on animal/wildlife/zoonotic implications for PPR.
- Considering that in the last 40 years all six pandemics have originated from the spillover of zoonotic diseases from animals, Veterinary Services are at the front line for preventing of zoonotic disease emergence and ensuring food security. They are a crucial part of the "Health workforce". Hence, any investment in national, regional and global health systems must consider the veterinary health workforce.
- As a founding member of the Quadripartite together with FAO/UNEP/WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health is a longstanding advocator and implementer of the One Health approach. The Quadripartite comprises the four international organisations mandated to sustainably balance and optimize the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment by

strengthening the capacity of their respective Members in the areas of prevention, detection and response in line with the One Health approach.

- In line with previous comments from G20 Members, request that the FIF explicitly consider the role of Quadripartite and One Health as essential elements for PPR. The FIF should support the implementation of the Quadripartite's One Health Joint Plan of Action and use it as a blueprint for action on PPR using a One Health approach. This Plan is currently being costed and will require sustainable investments to build national/regional and global PPR capacities. Combined, the Plan's action tracks will enable the world to be better informed, connected and prepared to prevent, predict, detect, and respond to global health threats and promote health and sustainable development.

The World Bank Board approved the establishment of the FIF on 30 June 2022, noting that financial commitments up to 1,1 \$Billion have already been made by Germany, Indonesia, United States of America, Singapore, European Union and the Wellcome Trust. We invite our Members in their discussions with the World Bank or their Finance Ministers to advocate that One Health, national Veterinary Services and the WOAHA feature more prominently in the FIF.

4. Key messages to be amplified by Members at the national, regional and global levels

Veterinary Services and the Animal Health Sector have a crucial role in influencing the dialogue on global health governance, including the pandemic instrument and the FIF. We encourage Delegates to mobilize their Ministers and other relevant Ministers involved in these discussions, mainly Health, Foreign Affairs and Finance Ministers, to proactively share the following key messages in all forums such as public hearings, written online submissions and direct negotiation processes:

- I. Due consideration must be given to the concerns of the animal health sector in the negotiations and to the important role that Veterinary Services and animal health sector, including wildlife play in pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.
- II. Ensure that any messages conveyed from countries underscore the importance of the One Health approach and the critical role of Veterinary Services in this whole of government, whole of society approach to reduce health threats.
- III. Encourage the involvement of Ministers supervising Veterinary Services to engage actively through appropriate inter-ministerial channels to ensure that the negotiations of the pandemic treaty are done in line with and underscore the essential role played by Veterinary Services in One Health resilience.
- IV. Advocate for One Health to be adopted as an underlying foundation of the new instrument, so it complements and strengthens the coherence between existing International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005, environmental treaties, and animal health regulations and standards as well as human, animal, and environmental health systems more broadly.
- V. Encourage Members to support and join the future Group of Friends of One Health through their Permanent Representation for WHO in Geneva.
- VI. Advocate to recognise the Quadripartite as special stakeholder in the INB, offering them opportunity to represent the voices and interests of their sectors in the negotiations process.
- VII. Act with urgency as the instrument is intended to be finalised and adopted at the 2024 WHO General Assembly, with a very tight schedule to deliver milestones starting with a working draft of the instrument in July 2022 and a first draft to be submitted for consideration at the 2023 WHO General Assembly.
- VIII. WOAHA and its Members advocate that any financial mechanism put into place to support the international instrument include sustainable financing for the measures required and to support the Quadripartite collaboration guide and accompany Members to implement a One Health approach. Furthermore, any discussions on financial support for competent, sustainable and resilient health systems capable of ensuring timely pandemic preparedness, prevention and response must consider the commitment and crucial engagement of national Veterinary Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1: WOAHA Briefing note to Members dated 26 October 2021 titled “*Project of International Treaty for Pandemic Preparedness and Response*”

Appendix 2: WOAHA Resolution n.29/2022 “*Contribution of the World Organisation for Animal Health and its Members to the negotiations related to an international instrument for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response*” (Appendix 2)

Appendix 2: WOAHA Resolution N.31/2021 “*How can the World Organisation for Animal Health support Veterinary Services to achieve One Health resilience*” (Appendix 3) adopted by the Assembly in May 2021.