

Dear Delegates and colleagues,

I will not remind you how many years Dr Yehia has been involved with the OIE/WOAH to support the veterinary services in his region. We all believe that he has always been there. That is why it may come as a surprise to celebrate his retirement today.

Dear Dr Yehia,

Your veterinary career began almost 55 years ago. I was fortunate that you told me how the young Ghazi was selected to study veterinary medicine at the Toulouse School in France; and how he returned to Lebanon where I am sure he played a key role in the development of the national veterinary services. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is an amazing adventure, and I think Dr Yehia will enjoy telling it to those who do not know it !

During all these years, we have witnessed your tireless enthusiasm, your abundance of ideas so that WOA, but also your region and your country - the beloved Lebanon - are better known and better supported. Your commitment has enabled you to create links between countries and between partners, to initiate numerous projects, to highlight the role of the VEs, often neglected by the leaders. You have undeniably left your mark on the veterinary profession. I believe, dear Dr Yehia, that all those present here have many memories of all that you have done with us and for us. And this will remain in our memories for a long time.

In addition to your professional activities, your passion for horses also led you to travel the world.

So today, ladies and gentlemen, wherever you travel with him, you can be sure that he knows someone and, of course, that he will invite you to the best Lebanese restaurant !

Dr Ghazi is not only driven by an obvious professional enthusiasm: he also has a contagious "joie de vivre", even if we know that this hides the pain of a life marked by personal tragedies.

Dear Dr Yehia, dear Ghazi, we are with you today to thank you for what you have given us, and to wish you a happy retirement with your family.