



World Organisation  
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17th Conference of the  
Regional Commission for the Middle East  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1 to 5 October 2023

**FINAL REPORT**

## Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Saudi Arabia, the 17th Conference of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Regional Commission for the Middle East was held in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) from 1 to 5 October 2023.
2. A total of 57 participants, comprising WOAH Delegates and representatives of 10 Members of the Region and senior officers from 8 national, regional and international organisations and institutions, attended the Conference. In addition, representatives of the private sector as well as private veterinary organisations from the Region and from the host country were present.

Members of the Commission: Bahrain, Cyprus, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

International/regional/national organisations/institutions: AAAID<sup>1</sup>, AOAD<sup>2</sup>, EuFMD<sup>3</sup>, GCC<sup>4</sup>, ICFAW<sup>5</sup>, ICO<sup>6</sup>, WVEPAH<sup>7</sup>, and the World Bank.

3. His Excellencies Engineer Ahmed Al-Eyada, Agriculture Deputy Ministry of Agriculture, and Engineer Ayman Algamdi, CEO of the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Plants Pests and Animal Diseases honoured the Conference with their presence during the official opening ceremony.
4. Dr Sanad Al-Harbi, Delegate Saudi Arabia and President of the Regional Commission for the Middle East, Dr Monique Eloit, Director General, Dr Mohamed Ali Alhosani, Acting Regional Representative for the Middle East and Subregional Representative for the Arabian Gulf, Dr Neo Mapiitse, Head of the Regional Activities Department, Dr Etienne Bonbon, President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, and Dr Ingo Ernst, President of the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission also participated in the Conference. The speakers presenting the two main Technical Items, namely Dr Salama Al Muhairi, Member of the One Health, High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) and Research and Development Department Manager at the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority and Dr El Moubasher Abubakr Farag, Member of OHHLEP and Acting Head of Communicable Diseases Control Programs at the Ministry of Public Health of Qatar, for Technical Item 1 and Dr Ahmed ElDrissi, External Consultant, for Technical Item 2, honoured the Conference with their presence.

## SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER 2023

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### Opening ceremony

5. The following authorities gave a welcome address:
  - H. E. Engineer Ahmed Al-Eyada, Deputy Minister of Agriculture,
  - Dr Hugo Idoyaga, President of WOAH World Assembly of Delegates (video message)
  - Dr Monique Eloit, WOAH Director General
  - H. E. Engineer Ayman Algamdi, CEO of the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Plants Pests and Animal Diseases.

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<sup>1</sup> AAAID : Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development

<sup>2</sup> AOAD : Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

<sup>3</sup> EuFMD : European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

<sup>4</sup> GCC : Gulf Cooperation Council

<sup>5</sup> ICFAW: International Coalition for animal welfare

<sup>6</sup> ICO : International Camel Organization

<sup>7</sup> WVEPAH: World Veterinary Education in Production Animal Health

### **Approval of the Programme**

6. The Provisional Programme was adopted (available in Annex 1). The PowerPoint presentations are available on the Conference website.

### **Appointment of the Conference Committee**

7. The Conference Committee was elected by participants as follows:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Chairperson:        | Dr Sanad Alharbi, Delegate of Saudi Arabia |
| Vice-Chairperson:   | Dr Samah Alsharif, Delegate of Oman        |
| Rapporteur General: | Dr Elias Ibrahim, Delegate of Lebanon      |

### **Appointment of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs**

8. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the Technical Items and the Analysis of the Animal Health Situation as follows:

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| Technical Item I:                        | Dr Ali Kayaf Kaltham (United Arab Emirates) (Chairperson)<br>Dr Elias Ibrahim (Lebanon) (acted as session Rapporteur) |
| Technical Item II:                       | Dr Fajar Al-salloom (Bahrain), (Chairperson)<br>Dr Yousef Al Azemi (Kuwait), (Rapporteur)                             |
| Analysis of the Animal Health Situation: | Dr Christodoulos Pipis (Cyprus), (Chairperson)<br>Eng. Al-Zeyara Abdulaziz (Qatar), (Rapporteur)                      |

### **WOAH:**

#### **Improving animal health globally to ensure a better future for all**

9. Dr Monique Eloit, WOAHA Director General, presented a brief overview of WOAHA's work in support to its Members.
10. She began her address by reminding participants of the overarching mission of the Organisation which is to ensure animal health worldwide due to its direct impact on livelihoods of millions of families, on food security and food safety, without forgetting the impact on human health when animal diseases are transmissible to humans.
11. She mentioned that, to support its Members to face obvious challenges such as TADs<sup>8</sup>, emerging diseases, zoonosis and food borne diseases, as well as new global challenges such as climate and socio economic changes, new consumption patterns, among other challenges that will require the Veterinary Services to adapt, the Organisation was working along several lines including its core mandate activities such as collection and dissemination of animal disease information and standards setting. She also mentioned the progress in global strategies as well as ambitious capacity building programmes some of which are implemented in close collaboration with partners. Additionally, she highlighted that WOAHA was ready to update its strategies as well as revise its standards if necessary, to better support its Members to face future challenges. She also recognised the need and willingness of the Organisation to integrate other areas of expertise so that animal health is addressed in a more holistic way.

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<sup>8</sup> Transboundary animal disease(s)

12. The main conclusions from Dr Eloit's presentation were as follows:

- The first area of engagement of WOAHA is related to animal health in the strict sense through strategies and initiatives targeting diseases such as FMD<sup>9</sup>, PPR<sup>10</sup>, Rabies and ASF<sup>11</sup>, many of which are addressed under the GF-TADs<sup>12</sup> umbrella.
- Over the years the Organisation has also invested in new areas which are also key for the support of Veterinary Services mainly to respond to new challenges such as animal welfare, AMR<sup>13</sup>, Biological threat reduction, capacity building including distance learning, and also aquatic animal health and wildlife health, two domains of great interest for the Middle East region.
- Animal disease prevention is key however, it is not always about preventing spill over to humans, it is also about actions in the animal health sector to limit the drivers of their emergence. Thus, a good example is the selection of Avian Influenza (AI) as a key topic of discussion during the 90th General Session allowing WOAHA and its Members assessing the current situation and the available tools.
- There is a clear need regarding improving diseases surveillance. Sharing information about disease circulation is an asset to ensure animal health globally.
- WOAHA is providing training to New Delegates to ensure they are well prepared to perform their duties and comply with their obligations. WOAHA Training Platform is one of the main training tools which provides online learning opportunities on 16 competency packages.
- It is key for WOAHA and its Members to take positions regarding key contemporary global challenges in order to ensure that the Organisation has a recognised voice beyond the Veterinary Services sector and to avoid being constrained to the field of livestock and trade. The celebration of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary should give WOAHA the opportunity to raise its image globally and beyond the veterinary sector.
- WOAHA and its Members need to be highly active in any political fora to ensure that the animal health voice is heard and considered in the ongoing negotiations for future health governance of which animal health is a key element.
- It is key that WOAHA and its mission be recognised by decision makers. The submission of the draft Pandemic Treaty at the 2024 WHO Assembly will be an important step for assessing the membership opinion with regards to the Quadripartite recognition.
- The recent creation in September 2022 of the Pandemic Fund hosted by the World Bank was an important additional step particularly because PVS was recognised as a criterion for the proposals. The Fund already raised US\$ 2 billion from 25 contributors, and today 19 applications have been selected for a first round of projects.
- WOAHA is doing its best to face and adapt itself to new challenges, to remain relevant to its Members, and to respond to their needs in the best way possible. Thus, WOAHA is engaging in a review process of its Basic Texts to analyse, evaluate, and improve WOAHA's institutional, technical, and financial governance to ensure optimal and sustainable delivery of its mandate in a legally sound manner. Such revision will include discussions on how to improve visibility and representativeness of Middle East Region within WOAHA Council.

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<sup>9</sup> Foot-and-mouth disease

<sup>10</sup> Peste des petits ruminants

<sup>11</sup> African swine fever

<sup>12</sup> Global framework for the progressive control of TADs

<sup>13</sup> Antimicrobial Resistance

### **Analysis of the Animal Health Situation in Members in the region during 2022/2023**

13. Dr Jenny Hutchison, Head of the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department (WAHIAD) presented an analysis of reporting and animal health situation in Members of the Middle East Region during 2021/2023. The main points presented were as follows:
- Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), and lumpy skin disease (LSD) remain to be the three diseases for which more immediate notifications (IN) and follow-up reports (FUR) are submitted to WOAAH. They represented the 66% of total submissions since the beginning of 2021. Only one event in aquatic species was notified during the reporting period. The median time of submission of IN to WOAAH since confirmation for the reporting period was 6 which is significantly higher than the requirements (within 24 hours) in Chapter 1.1. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*.
  - In general, there has been a slight decrease in the number of six-monthly reports for submitted for terrestrial species by Members in the region since 2022. Regarding aquatic animal diseases, there is a serious gap in reporting consistently throughout the years (50% of Members submitting their six-monthly reports). Dr Hutchison reminded Members of their reporting obligations and encouraged Members to use the WAHIS support desk to seek for support regarding submission of reports. In addition, Dr Hutchison highlighted that WOAAH already received few reports for the first semester of 2023 and commended Members for their continuous support and cooperation.
  - Regarding FMD, while serotype O continues to be the most widely distributed serotype in the region, it was noted the new incursions of SAT 2 serotype to new territories (i.e., Oman). Dr Hutchison took the opportunity to commend the Delegate of Oman for the reporting transparency and cooperation. Dr. Hutchison commended Members for their continuous progress in the control of FMD which is supported by the current situation of Members of the region in the progressive control pathway (PCP). Most of Members in the region are currently in stage of the PCP.
  - Regarding HPAI, while occurrence of cases in the region has been significantly lower than in other parts of the world (65% of Members in the region reported the disease as 'absent' since 2021), it was stressed that the disease remains a serious concern for the world. It was noted that there was a considerable gap in the difference between the level of surveillance activities in poultry and wild birds. For example, on average, general surveillance and targeted surveillance in poultry was in place in around 70% of Members while in wild birds this was less than 10% of Members. Dr Hutchison stressed that surveillance accompanied by high quality information is key to support early detection and rapid response to potential threats to both animal and public health.
  - Regarding LSD, Members were informed that the disease has been reported as 'present' in over 60% of Members in the region. While the data suggested that the number of outbreaks reported in 2022 decreased compared to 2021, this is explained by the fact that around 25% of Members in the region had not submitted their six-monthly reports of 2022 by the time of the meeting. Dr Hutchison reminded Members in the region that a real and accurate representation of the disease occurrence and distribution in the region cannot be evaluated without the support of Members in submitting consistently their six-monthly reports. With regard to control measures in place, it was noted that while the disease is notifiable in over 80% of Members, surveillance activities in cattle were implemented in 60% of Members and in buffalo populations in less than 40% of Members. Dr Hutchison emphasized the need to increase surveillance in all susceptible populations in order to increase the likelihood of detection.
  - Regarding the progress of the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS). Dr Hutchison informed Members that optimisation and development continues alongside evolutive maintenance activities. The improvement of the Early Warning Module has been completed, resulting in a far more user-friendly and stable module. The current focus is the optimization of the six-monthly Report and the development of the Annual Report, both of

which should be complete by the second quarter of 2024. A strengthened collaboration between Qlik and the IT provider will deal with the stabilization and performance of the dashboards, improving the analytical capabilities of WAHIS. WOAHA continuous to strengthen reporting activity by engaging with the Focal points via one-to-one or group training sessions. This has already resulted in an increase of reports and better visibility of the animal health situation in the region. Alongside, online webinars and demo sessions have been organized with Members of the Middle East Region and other organisations, demonstrating how to get the best value out of the data available.

- Global FMD surveillance is important as it facilitates the understanding of the FMD situation in East Africa and the Region as well as to be prepared for any event. After COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to barriers to reporting, some challenges faced by Members include the cost of samples shipment that have gone up threefold, cold chain maintenance that also impacted field samples collection. However, some Members managed to submit samples to WOAHA Reference Laboratories for FMD, thereby increasing confidence on their disease transparency in the Region.
- Resource mobilisation and advocacy are key to ensure Members secure funds for TADs control. Sharing of risk information such as animal movement patterns, vaccinations, vaccines details and reporting is important to update global information systems. Regional agreements are useful to share information timely.
- Early warning is key to ensure transparency in the global animal disease situation. By timely reporting diseases through WAHIS, Members allow WOAHA to notify other Members so that necessary preventive actions can be taken by concerned Members and therefore, global animal health is ensured.

**Revision of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code:  
Process, September report highlights and key topics for Middle East region**

14. Dr Etienne Bonbon, President of the Terrestrial Code Commission, presented in detail WOAHA standards setting process regarding terrestrial animals.
15. He provided details regarding the report of the last Code Commission meeting, including the texts proposed for comments and adoption, and highlighting those of particular interest for the Region.
16. He concluded by stressing the need for more engagement and contributions from Members of the Middle East region into WOAHA standards setting process, through commenting on the Code Commission work programme and on proposed new or revised texts, as well as through proposing expertise from the region for the *ad hoc* groups.

**MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2023**

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**Revision of the Aquatic Animal Health Code: Process, September report highlights  
and key topics for Middle East region**

17. Dr Ingo Ernst, President of the Aquatic Code Commission, presented in detail the work of the Aquatic Commission and the development and revision of standards.
18. He underlined that WOAHA aquatic standards represent an agreed approach to improve aquatic animal health globally and provide a harmonised approach to manage the risks of disease spread associated with trade. He mentioned the contribution of activities of WOAHA Aquatic Animal Health Strategy to the Commission's work plan.
19. Dr Ernst concluded by mentioning that standards must continue to evolve as the aquaculture industry evolves and new scientific information becomes available. Development of those standards takes time and, Members were encouraged to actively participate in the standard setting process and to comment also on the work of the Aquatic Commission and anticipating future needs.

20. The Regional Commission recognised that there were advancements in awareness of the importance of aquatic animal health beyond the Code and Manual and also the recognition thanks to the focus on aquatic animal issues in wildlife, PVS and AMR related activities.

**Technical item I (with questionnaire):**

**One Health: coordination, communication and cooperation between Veterinary, Public Health and Environmental Protection Services**

21. Technical Item I, entitled “One Health: coordination, communication and cooperation between Veterinary, Public Health and Environmental Protection Services”, presented by Dr Salama Al Muhairi, Member of the One Health, High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) and Research and Development Department Manager at the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority and Dr El Moubasher Abubakr Farag, Member of OHHLEP and Acting Head of Communicable Diseases Control Programs at the Ministry of Public Health of Qatar, prompted discussions among participants, allowing the Regional Commission for the Middle East to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with WOAHA General Rules. Final recommendations are available in Annex 2.

**Session on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):  
The Leadership Role from the Middle East Region**

22. The session on Antimicrobial Resistance was introduced by Dr Monique Eloit, WOAHA Director General, and to discuss the topic, the session brought together the Delegates of Bahrain and Oman, the coordinator of the Ministerial conference on AMR in Riyadh 2024, the Director of AMR Public Health Authority and the Focal Point for Aquatic Animal Health from Saudi Arabia, and the Head of WOAHA AMR and Veterinary Products Department.
23. The regional leadership vision on AMR was explained and the commitments and actions from the Third Ministerial Conference on AMR (Oman- November 2022) was reminded. Speakers also commented on Saudi Arabia’s national plan to reduce AMR and the vision and plans around the AMR Fourth Ministerial Conference (November 2024). The role of AQMENET on curbing AMR was also highlighted. Finally, the Global context and actions towards UNGA<sup>14</sup> 2024 were described. The following are conclusions from the presentations and discussions:
- Following the recent signature of a Gulf Cooperation Council plan to respond to the resistant microbes’ outbreak in the animal health field, WOAHA’s Director General suggested to bring it further, in light of the upcoming fourth Ministerial conference planned in Riyadh, to a first inter-ministerial regional network on AMR, ensuring successful cross-sectoral collaborations, as an action to face one of the current challenges in the effective implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs);
  - Ensuring sustainable funding is key to ensure effective implementation of NAPs;
  - Mobilising resources remains difficult for some Members considering the context of competing priorities;
  - The need to reach Zero use of medically important antimicrobials for human medicine in animals for non-veterinary medical purposes or in crop production and agri-food systems for non-Phyosanitary purposes, and zero use of antimicrobials for growth promotion were highlighted by the Director General as cost-effective actions requesting limited to no-need of financial resources;

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<sup>14</sup> UN General Assembly



- Other immediate cost-effective actions were underlined by the Head of WOAHA AMR and Veterinary Products Department, as they leverage the existence in most of the Members, monitoring systems for antimicrobial use in animals:
  - o The report of quantitative data to ANIMUSE, the global database set by WOAHA on the use of antimicrobials in animals. As today, only three Members within the Region report quantitative data, and
  - o Sharing of existing data within and across sectors (i.e., aquatic animal health, data between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture), to be jointly reported and analysed at national, regional, and global level.
- Finally, the importance of the aquatic animal sector regarding the use of anti-microbial was underlined.

### **Towards Zero by 30: Rabies Control in the Middle East**

Dr Rachel Tidman, Global Rabies Coordinator, Dr Monal Daptardar, Scientific Coordinator from WOAHA Science Department and Dr Paolo Dalla Villa, Technical Officer from WOAHA Subregional Representation in Brussels presented on rabies control in the Middle East, underlining that rabies is a global problem that requires intersectoral collaboration following the One Health approach. The main conclusion from the session were as follows:

- Rabies elimination is a model for the operationalisation of the One Health concept.
- The Regional Commission from Middle East highlighted that dog population management is a challenge for implementing rabies control activities in the region. However, it is essential to note that sustained dog vaccination is a critical element in eliminating dog-mediated rabies. The national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination should be complemented with a sustainable long-term dog population management plan.
- WOAHA has updated the international standard on rabies and dog population management for owned or unowned dogs to support countries in planning and implementing the national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination and accomplishing dog population management. Members should consider the cultural aspects including the societal attitudes towards dogs, while developing their national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination, and ensure the correct implementation of the [Terrestrial Animal Health Code Chapter 7.7 'Dog population management'](#) recommendations on responsible dog ownership, animal welfare, animal health and veterinary public health
- Members should share and use best practices and tools, which would be a key in developing highly effective strategies and efficient ways of streamlining rabies control activities in the region. Members can take advantage of past experiences of Europe, the WOAHA Platform on Animal Welfare (SAM2.0 tool), and other initiatives on controlling free roaming dog population in order to access to practical information for dog population management.
- WOAHA can support Members with the development and implementation of national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination in line with 'Zero by 30: the Global Strategic Plan to end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030', and several tools and resources are available, including through the United Against Rabies Forum.
- Members are urged to collaborate with local governments, private sectors, civil society, and international organisation, using the One Health approach to advance toward the "Zero by 30" goal. They should also partner with public health authorities and other competent sectors to develop a national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination. An effective cross-sectoral cooperation would assist in securing financial resources for the veterinary sector.



- Strategic scaling up dog vaccinations by using good quality vaccines and promoting responsible dog ownership is essential for a successful implementation of the national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination. Members are encouraged to access high-quality, low-cost dog vaccines through the WOAHA rabies vaccine bank. This can be a catalyst to start and scale up dog vaccination campaigns and improve dog vaccination.
- WOAHA can support Members in building capacity through Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway programme with Rabies Specific Content and the National Bridging Workshop on Rabies organised in collaboration with WHO. These tools will empower the Veterinary Services via a systems approach and building capacity in the One Health space;
- Members are encouraged to nominate a 'National Rabies Point of Contact' with the main responsibility to advocate for a paradigm shift in rabies elimination policy, monitor the implementation of the national strategic plan for dog mediated rabies elimination, support the regional coordination;
- Members that fulfil the provisions of [Article 8.15.1](#) are encouraged to apply for the WOAHA endorsement of the official control programme for dog-mediated rabies;
- The WOAHA and UAR forum continue to be accessible to assist Middle East Member countries in their endeavours to eliminate dog mediated rabies by dogs and effectively control their dog populations;
- A follow up activity will be considered for the next year (2024) in order to address the regional specific needs regarding dog population management and rabies control.

### **Update on the Camel Middle East Network (CAMENET)**

Dr Asma Abdi Mohammed Shah, Director of Veterinary Laboratory in Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA), presented the objectives and an update regarding the activities of CAMENET.

She reminded that the Steering committee was represented by the Members whereas the Technical Committee was a scientific committee. The Technical Committee includes experts from Middle East as well as from other regions. The selection of members of the Technical committee is guided by its terms of reference.

The cooperation between Tunisia and Middle East was welcomed. The importance of keeping the website updated with important information for Members was highlighted. The interest to support the work plan of CAMENET was acknowledged.

It was also informed that CAMENET new website will be launched soon and the validation of the 2024 CAMENET action plan was in process.

### **Update on the Regional Network for Aquatic Animal Diseases (AQMENET)**

Dr Ali Al Shaikhi, Chair of the AQMENET Steering Committee, provided participants with an update regarding the Regional Network for Aquatic Animal Diseases (AQMENET). The main conclusion from the session were as follows:

- Aquaculture production is growing up in the region, AQMENET can play a strategic role in the facilitation of aquatic production and trade of aquaculture products.
- There is clear a momentum that still effective since the launching of the network last November. Thus, Members were encouraged to take advantage of this momentum and get actively involved with the network by, among others, sharing best practices and know-how.
- The network needs to be supported technically and also financially. WOAHA, through its World Fund and thanks to the contribution from Italy, will dedicate €300 000 to AQMENET activities.

### **Report on the activities conducted in the Region since the last Regional Conference**

Dr Sanad Alharbi, Delegate of Saudi Arabia and President of the Regional Commission for the Middle East, briefly presented the activities conducted in the Region since the last Regional Conference. The following key points were highlighted:

- After the difficult period due to the pandemic period, the Region was showing a positive reactivation of the activities such as engagement in PVS Pathway, capacity building on AMR, TADs, and One Health.
- Twinning programmes and the designation of WOAHA Collaborating Centres in the region and the networks mentioned above.
- Aquatic Animal Health related activities through AQMENET were taking an important part in the agenda of the Region. Other activities related to TADs control in the region continued to be implemented and supported;
- Members were exhorted to take advantage of the Regional Core Group to ensure a better communication and coordination among the Regional Commission, the Bureau, the regional Member of the Council and WOAHA Regional and Subregional Representation and Headquarters so that activities are planned in line with current regional needs;
- The relevance of PPP in the region was highlighted. Creating enabling environment that encourage effective, efficient and sustainable PPPs was emphasised as an important factor for the Region in order to take advantage of this mechanism to address challenges in animal health;
- There is a diversity of needs in the region thus, the WOAHA e-learning platform which is under development and will soon be available was highlighted by WOAHA Director General as an excellent tool to better support Members (Delegates and their associates/collaborators), to build the necessary skills including on advocacy;
- Regarding training needs in aquaculture aspects, AQMENET is foreseen to have some capacity building activities as well as the joint cooperation between Italy and the World Veterinary Education in Production Animal Health;
- Finally, the Director General reminded the participants that WOAHA is reviewing its business model thanks to the revision of its basic texts, and it will include strengthening the way Regional and Subregional offices support and better respond to Members' needs.

#### **TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023**

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#### **Technical item II (without questionnaire): Ensuring strong performing and financially sustainable Veterinary Services in the Region**

24. Technical Item II, entitled "Ensuring strong performing and financially sustainable Veterinary Services in the Region", presented by Dr Ahmed ElIdrissi, External Consultant, prompted interesting discussions among participants, allowing the Regional Commission for the Middle East to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with WOAHA General Rules. Final recommendations are available in Annex 3.

### **Funding possibilities through the pandemic fund and one health funds**

25. Dr Franck Berthe, Senior Health Specialist and One Health Lead from the World Bank, briefly explained to Delegates, the opportunities of finance through the Pandemic and One Health Funds giving key details on how to approach finance in practice and underlining that having a clear understanding of the beneficiaries of the investments could better guide Veterinary Services to identify the potential funding institutions, including the potential support from the private sector. Among the main key points of the presentation, it was highlighted that:
- Veterinary Service need support to well define the narrative to present the case for investment;
  - It is key to have a framework for investment, multiple sources of funding for sustainability; and
  - shared responsibilities between public and private sector and have a sustainable funding plan.

### **Fostering WOA - Middle East Partnership: Unlocking Investment Potential**

26. Dr Nada Essawy, Resource Mobilisation and Grants Management Officer from Engagement and Investment Department, called for action by Members and partners in the Middle East to consider potential investment options in the Region.
27. She started by highlighting the key role of WOA not only when it comes to ensuring animal health and welfare globally but in contributing to building a more sustainable world, so livelihoods are transformed, economies are boosted, and the future is safer and healthier for everyone.
28. She briefly referred to the Middle East societal relationship with animals, the global impact of animal diseases emphasising particularly on the high cost of animal disease outbreaks in the Region.
29. Finally, she explained the multi-faceted return on investment that WOA can offer, highlighting that the Organisation was a strong case for investment thanks to:
- A strengthened health security providing health dividends, economic development and sustainable livelihoods, and a boosted tourism.
  - Enhanced trade, production, and investments facilitating a safe trade, a sustainable and qualitative production with multiple effects such as industry flourish, spur job creation, innovation, and overall economic expansion as well as international investment.
30. The following are main points of conclusion from the presentation:
- WOA's contributions go beyond immediate services, they offer global expertise, standardisation, and a platform for international and regional collaboration.
  - Currently, no investments through the World Fund support activities in the Middle East region. Targeted regional investment from the region to the region will support regional strategies, coordination, and harmonisation offering unparalleled strategic benefits such as :
    - o Positioning itself as a global leader in animal health and biosecurity thus, increasing its influence on international animal health strategies;
    - o Ensuring the intensification of WOA activities in the region.
  - There are multiple avenues to consider for investing in WOA such as elevating the statutory contributions to the higher categories, contributing to one of the two extraordinary contributions in the form of extraordinary contributions, allocating voluntary contributions to fund targeted projects aligned with national and/or regional goals.
  - It is key to engage with respective and appropriate ministries and stakeholders to articulate the compelling benefits of investing in WOA, to increasing comprehension and appreciation of WOA's mandate, role and the added value of regional Membership.

### **Open discussion: Effective resource mobilisation to ensure financial sustainability of Veterinary Services**

31. An open discussion was conducted inviting all participants to interact around the effective resource mobilisation to ensure financial sustainability of Veterinary Services in the Middle East Region. The following main points were highlighted:
- Since its foundation, WOAHA first mandate is to set up standards as well as to recognise official animal health status of countries/zones for certain diseases primarily to improve disease control and prevention methods while facilitating and regulating safe trade in animals and animal products between Members. Thus, it is key for the Organisation to remain independent from the private sector and ensure its main funding of sources for this mandate come from the public sector, notably from Members statutory contributions;
  - The World Organisation for Animal Health has a proven record of supporting the strengthening of Veterinary Services and, since the establishment of its flagship programme, the PVS Pathway, it has continued to affirm that, for the Veterinary Services to fulfil their mission, they require sustainable investment.
  - The PVS Pathway missions conducted over the past decade have shown that Veterinary Services are chronically under-resourced in many Members, leading to sub-optimal organisation and staffing of Veterinary Services, thereby jeopardising animal health and welfare nationally, regionally and globally, with impact on public health and the economy, among others.
  - WOAHA recognises and promotes the important role of the private sector in the delivery of high quality and efficient services in the veterinary domain. PPPs are consequently also recognised as important means of optimising animal health systems and Veterinary Services worldwide. It is also widely recognised that strengthening partnership with the private sector is essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
  - It is key for Members to well define their priorities based on the national and regional needs and then to develop a clear and impactful narrative for the case of investment detailing how the capital invested will increase its value over time and addressing the investor's financial goals, risk tolerance, investment horizon, and investment strategies;
  - Reporting on an impact basis and including figures on the return of investment is key for investors;
  - Among the main challenges encountered by Members there was they need for key partners, high level authorities and decision makers to understand the important role Veterinary Services play in the society, which goes beyond livestock and trade, as well as the urgent need to allocate funds for emergency preparedness and disease outbreaks;
  - There is a clear need for Members to learn how to advocate and mobilise resources.

### **The threat of vector borne diseases in the Middle East region and Members' preparedness**

32. Dr Paolo Calistri from the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM) G. Caporale* gave a presentation on the threat of vector borne diseases highlighting the 3 vector-borne diseases of major concern for the Region due to their impact on animal health and international trade: Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), Rift Valley Fever (RVF), and African Horse sickness (AHS). He briefly described the diseases, their geographical distribution and the main epidemiological features.

33. He underlined that it was key to identify the factors that are associated with the occurrence of the disease or that facilitate the emergence/spread of the infection in animal populations in order to strengthen the rapid implementation of measures in case of occurrence (or increased risk) of epidemics, or in prevention strategies. Environmental drivers linked to ecological and climatic factors may influence the presence and abundance of vectors. Climatic conditions, for example, may influence the occurrence and frequency of vector-borne infections, directly through the effect on vectors and pathogens, or indirectly through the impact on ecology and behaviour of hosts.
34. Finally, he provided with key points for control and response strategies in the various epidemic phases and described the support for risk-based surveillance that could be offered by the results of a WOAAH project titled “Defining Ecoregions and Prototyping on EO-based Vector-borne Disease Surveillance System for North Africa (PROVNA)”.

### **Discussion of recommendations**

35. Draft Recommendations 1 and 2 on the two Technical Items of the Conference were presented to participants and put forward for discussion. Both draft Recommendations were submitted for adoption at Thursday session with amendments as per participants’ suggestions and discussions.
36. Following adoption by the Regional Commission, the Recommendations will be submitted for endorsement by the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2024. Once endorsed by the Assembly, they will serve as an important guideline for Members of the Regional Commission for the Middle East, as well as for the Organisation as a whole.

### **Special session on WOAAH Delegates’ Responsibilities around the year**

37. Ms. Nathaly Monsalve, Regional Activities Coordination Manager from the Regional Activities Department, presented the six key activities on the calendar year of the Delegates: 1) participation in institutional meetings, 2) payment of the contributions to WOAAH, 3) disease notification, 4) participation in the standards setting process, 5) actions related to disease status recognition, and 6) AMR data submission.
38. The Delegates identified some challenges they encountered when carrying out their responsibilities and these included not meeting the deadlines for notifications and on submission of their WAHIS six-monthly reports. This is also partly technical because the platform is new. The collection of data from other health sectors for updating WOAAH reports and questionnaires was also a challenge due to low levels of collaboration between sectors.

## **WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2023**

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### **Special session on the new PVS Information System**

39. The Performance of Veterinary Services Information System (PVSIS) was recently developed by the Capacity Building Department and was presented for the first time to the Delegates of the Region. The Delegates benefitted from a training on the PVSIS during the session, provided by the Jennifer Lasley, MPH Senior Programme Coordinator of the PVS Pathway from the Capacity Building Department of WOAAH, accompanied by external service providers Oshin Dhand and Wasif Mirza Raza.
40. The PVSIS cultivates existing and future recommendations made in PVS Reports to monitor progress and prioritise actions. The insights highlight where experienced and independent experts recommend investment that can improve the performance of Veterinary Services. A further benefit is increased compliance with WOAAH international standards and improved animal health and welfare worldwide.

41. The core learning focus was learning to retrieve information and develop analytical capabilities. Participants learned how to interpret and use meaningful insights from the hundreds of PVS Evaluation reports produced by the PVS Pathway and how to use them in different contexts and for different purposes. Through hands-on exercises, they gained proficiency in using the portal and understanding of the key features and functionalities now at their disposal. The training emphasised collaborative data sharing and communication, as well as opportunities for exploitation in the future. By encouraging knowledge exchange, the workshop fostered a culture of collective learning and data sharing across all stakeholders, from WOAHO Members to Partners.

### **Cultural and Technical visit**

42. Participants greatly appreciated the cultural visit organised during the afternoon by the host country.

## **THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2023**

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### **Promoting and supporting laboratory scientific excellence in the region**

43. Ms Jennifer Lasley, Senior Programme Coordinator from the Capacity Building Department presented success stories and key actions to promote and support laboratory scientific excellence in the region.
44. She highlighted major areas where Members in the region can work to grow and nurture their laboratory expertise: 1) know WOAHO International Standards; 2) understand and use national laboratory network capacity; 3) choose a singular topic of expertise and perfect skill; 4) set objectives and invest in them; 5) nurture and grow expertise and talent; and 6) look beyond your borders to share expertise. She underlined that the investments made to date to grow laboratory excellence and expertise will benefit the region and continued investment is needed to support regional and global efforts for animal health and welfare.

### **Observatory: Evidence-based approach to address Members' needs and encourage the implementation of international standards**

45. Dr Gaspar Avendano Perez, Technical Coordinator of WOAHO Observatory, briefly presented the objectives, roadmap and achievements of the Observatory so far.
46. Regarding the objectives he reminded that those were: 1) gather data and insights regarding the implementation of WOAHO standards; 2) identify areas where the implementation of WOAHO standards falls short; and 3) dissemination of information, preserving confidentiality.
47. Regarding the roadmap, he explained that the observatory was currently working in the thematic studies and updated dashboards and that also the data portal will be assessed. In 2024, there will be the second monitoring report and the data portal development. The observatory should be fully operational in 2025.
48. Dr Avendano also informed the first Observatory Annual Report was published in December 2022, he explained the components of the report and underlined that it was the most downloaded WOAHO document in Jan 2023. He also highlighted that the observatory work was presented and acknowledged in several events organised by other international organisations such as OECD, WTO, IPPC, and CODEX.
49. He informed that some strategic adjustments will be done in the Observatory programme including, among others, a synchronisation with the preparation of WOAHO Strategic Plans, support to the newly elected Specialist Commissions in formulating their work plan and dedicating more time to Thematic Studies.
50. Finally, Dr Avendano indicated that the main deliverables to expect in the coming years were the monitoring report, the thematic studies and the data portal.

### **Proposal of date and venue of the 18th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Middle East**

51. The President of the Commission asked Delegates present if any of their countries wished to host the 18th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Middle East in 2025.
52. The WOAHA Delegate of Cyprus expressed the wish for his country to host the Conference.
53. The proposal was unanimously accepted. However, the Regional Commission decided to give time until the next meeting of the Regional Commission during the General Session (2024) to allow for the Members not present, the opportunity to also propose their country as the venue for the next Conference.
54. A message will be sent to all Delegates asking for additional proposals.
55. The final venue of the Conference will be confirmed during the meeting of the Regional Commission in May 2024 and submitted for the formal endorsement of the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2024.
56. Precise dates will then be decided in coordination with WOAHA Director General.

### **Adoption of Recommendations**

57. Dr Monique Eloit explained the procedures for adopting the report and the recommendations of the Conference. The draft final report will be published on the Conference website ([Recommendations and Final Report](#)) and participants will have the opportunity to provide comments until a certain deadline, those comments will be then taken into account before closing the report. However, the recommendations had to be adopted during the current session and cannot be changed subsequently, only editing being accepted.
58. The two draft recommendations were unanimously adopted and will be published along with the final report.

### **Closing ceremony**

59. Dr Monique Eloit thanked Saudi Arabia for being the excellent hosting and the warm welcome accorded to the participants making the stay in Riyadh pleasant and memorable.
60. She gave special thanks to His Excellency, Engineer Ahmed Al-Eyada, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, and His Excellency, Engineer Ayman Algamdi, CEO of the National Centre for the Prevention and Control of Plants Pests and Animal Diseases for all the support provided to ensure the success of such an important event for the Region.
61. She also thanked the Delegates, speakers and all participants for their active attendance and the fruitful week of exchanges.
62. Dr Eloit concluded by underlining that Regional Conferences were a unique opportunity for Delegates to collectively discuss and make recommendations on the main animal health and welfare regional issues and that the 17th Conference was even more unique as it had marked the resuming of face-to-face Regional Conferences in the Region since November 2019 when the Region last meet in person in Abu Dhabi.
63. Finally, Dr Sanad Alharbi, Delegate of Saudi Arabia, thanked all the collaborators and the organising team among others, for the successful conference. He also thanked all participants and speakers for the high quality of the deliberations and active discussions. He wished participants a safe travel back home and declared the Conference closed at 12:00 pm.



**17th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Middle East**  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1 to 5 October 2023

**FINAL PROGRAMME**

**SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER 2023**

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- 11:00 a.m. Registration of participants and distribution of documents
- 1:00 p.m. Opening ceremony
- 2:00 p.m. Group Photo
- 2:20 p.m. Approval of the Programme  
Appointment of the Conference Committee (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and General Rapporteur)  
Appointment of session chairpersons and rapporteurs (Technical Items and Animal Health Situation)
- 2:30 p.m. WOAHA: Improving animal health globally to ensure a better future for all (Dr Monique Eloit, WOAHA Director General)
- 3:00 p.m. Discussions
- 3:30 p.m. Analysis of the Animal Health Situation in Member Countries in the region during 2022/2023 (Dr Jenny Hutchison, Head of the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
- 4:00 p.m. Discussions
- 4:30 p.m. Break
- 5:00 p.m. Revision of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code: Process, September report highlights and key topics for Middle East region (Dr Etienne Bonbon, President of the Terrestrial Code Commission)
- 5:30 p.m. Discussion
- 6:00 p.m. End of the day

**MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2023**

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- 8:30 a.m. Revision of the Aquatic Animal Health Code: Process, September report highlights and key topics for Middle East region (Dr Ingo Ernst, President of the Aquatic Code Commission)
- 9:00 a.m. Discussions
- 9:30 a.m. Technical item I (with questionnaire)  
One Health: coordination, communication and cooperation between Veterinary, Public Health and Environmental Protection Services (Dr Salama Al Muhairi, Member of the One Health, High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) and Research and Development Department Manager at the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management

- Authority and Dr El Moubasher Abubakr Farag, Member of OHHLEP and Acting Head of Communicable Diseases Control Programs at the Ministry of Public Health of Qatar)
- 10:15 a.m. Discussion
- 10:45 a.m. Break  
*Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by designated small group*
- 11:15 a.m. Session on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR): The Leadership Role from the Middle East Region
- 12:30 a.m. Lunch break
- 2:00 p.m. Towards Zero by 30: Rabies Control in the Middle East (WOAH Science Department)
- 2:30 p.m. Discussion
- 3:00 p.m. Update on the Camel Middle East Network (CAMENET) (Dr Asma Abdi Mohammed Shah, Director, Veterinary Laboratory, Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA))
- 3:30 p.m. Discussions
- 4:00 p.m. Update on the Regional Network for Aquatic Animal Diseases (AQMENET) (Dr Ali Al Shaikhi, Chair of the AQMENET Steering Committee, Director General of Fisheries at the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia)
- 4:15 p.m. Discussion
- 4:30 p.m. Break
- 5:00 p.m. Report on the activities conducted in the Region since the last Regional Conference (Dr Sanad Alharbi, Delegate of Saudi Arabia and President of the Regional Commission for the Middle East)
- 5:30 p.m. Discussion
- 6:00 p.m. End of the Session
- 7:30 p.m. Official dinner

## **TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023**

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- 9:00 a.m. Technical item II (without questionnaire): Ensuring strong performing and financially sustainable Veterinary Services in the Region (Dr Ahmed Eildrissi, External Consultant)
- 9:45 a.m. Funding possibilities through the pandemic fund and one health funds (Dr Franck Berthe, Senior Health Specialist, One Health Lead, World Bank)
- 10:00 a.m. Discussion
- 10:30 a.m. Fostering WOA - Middle East Partnership: Unlocking Investment Potential (Dr Nada Essawy, Resource Mobilisation and Grants Management Officer, Engagement and Investment Department)
- 10:45 a.m. Discussion
- 11:00 a.m. Break  
*Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group*

- 11:30 a.m. Panel discussion: Effective resource mobilisation to ensure financial sustainability of Veterinary Services
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 2:00 p.m. The threat of vector borne diseases in the Middle East region and Members preparedness (Dr Paolo Calistri, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM) G. Caporale, Teramo)
- 2:30 p.m. Discussion
- 3:00 p.m. Discussion of recommendations
- 4:00 p.m. Break
- 4:30 p.m. Special session on WOAHA Delegates Responsibilities around the year  
*(for Delegates only)*
- 5:30 p.m. End of the Session
- 7:30 p.m. Official dinner

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#### **WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2023**

- 8:30 a.m. Special session on the new PVS Information System  
*(for Delegates and members of delegations only)*
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Special session on the new PVS Information System (cont.)  
*(for Delegates and members of delegations only)*
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch break
- 2:00 p.m. Cultural technical visit

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#### **THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2023**

- 9:30 a.m. Promoting and supporting laboratory scientific excellence in the region (Ms Jennifer Lasley, Senior Programme Coordinator, Capacity Building Department)
- 10:00 a.m. Discussion
- 10:30 a.m. Observatory: Evidence-based approach to address Members' needs and encourage the implementation of international standards (Dr Gaspar Avendano Perez, Technical Coordinator, WOAHA Observatory)
- 11:15 a.m. Break
- 11:45 a.m. Proposal of date and venue of the 18th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Middle East
- 12:00 p.m. Conference conclusions and Adoption of Recommendations
- 12:30 p.m. Closing ceremony
- 1:00 p.m. End of the Conference

**17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Regional Commission for the Middle East**  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1-5 October 2023

Recommendation No. 1

**One Health: Coordination, Communication and Cooperation between Veterinary,  
Public Health, and Environmental Protection Services**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. The use of the One Health approach, including effective communication with the stakeholders and the general public, will be key in the prevention of zoonotic diseases and future pandemics and other health threats such as Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), food safety hazards and vector borne diseases;
2. The 27th Tripartite Annual Executive Meeting agreed to jointly develop a strategy and action plan to prevent future zoonotic pandemics through the One Health approach;
3. The One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA), which was launched in October 2022, is a collaborative, participatory effort among FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA and supported by scientific advice from the One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) to strengthen country-level collaboration, communication, capacity building, and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-environment interface;
4. Operationalisation of One Health requires a “whole of society and whole of government approach” with leadership from animal, human, and environmental sectors; community, NGOs and academia involvement, including collaboration with sub-regional, regional, and global partners. It also requires inter-ministerial cooperation and data sharing as well as coordinated research;
5. Supportive political environment and legislative structure at national, regional and global levels as well as adequate financial support are key for the successful implementation of multisectoral initiatives;
6. WOA has invested significantly to play an active role in the Tripartite and later the Quadripartite collaboration on One Health, in G7, and G20, as well as during key ministerial encounters;
7. The UN General Assembly political declaration adopted in September 2023 calling for strengthening high-level international coordination allowing Members commitment to better prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics;
8. WOA continues to ensure that guidelines, information, and key notes are regularly shared with Members, and relevant activities are organised to provide Members with all the necessary elements to work at national level and advocate to the relevant government authorities to commit and create a national platform for One Health implementation;
9. WOA’s work has already yielded positive results, one concrete example is the PVS Pathway being considered as one of the selection criteria for the Pandemic Fund applications used by the World Bank;
10. The recommendations of the Quadripartite Regional Meeting, held in Muscat in May 2023, to accelerate the implementation of One Health in Eastern Mediterranean Region and that the “Friends of One Health” group facilitates discussions and exchanges with key partners regarding the articulation of information to be included in the pandemic treaty to ensure the animal health sector is taken into account and included at all levels of the negotiations; and

11. The Regional One Health Operational Framework is aligned with the Global Quadripartite OH JPA and aims at supporting Members to accelerate the implementation of the One Health concept at national level.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Members recognise the importance of the One Health approach in the prevention of zoonotic diseases, future pandemics and other health threats at the animal-human-environment interface and therefore, equitably allocate sufficient and sustainable funding, domestic and international resources across health sectors to support One Health coordination activities;
2. Members address legislative gaps to ensure that there is a solid legal foundation for One Health coordination and implementation, including policies and legislation that promote intersectoral collaboration and information sharing as well as integration of the environmental health considerations into animal and human health policies and programs, including at regional and subregional level;
3. Members encourage and facilitate collaboration between human health, animal health, and environmental health sectors, including research and academia, through establishing or strengthening One Health platforms, plans, strategies and multisectoral coordination mechanisms and M&E frameworks;
4. Members ensure the sustainability of communication and information sharing channels between sectors.
5. Members recognise themselves as partners in the health sector and take advantage of the clear strategy and tools available to ensure the operationalisation of the One Health approach at national level, including being part of the “Friends of One Health” group;
6. Members raise awareness on the importance of the One Health approach to foster political support, create trust with government officials, health workers, veterinarians, farmers as well as with different civil societies and stakeholders to encourage government officials prioritising it in their policies and allocating resources for the operationalisation of One Health at national level;
7. Members take advantage of all the support provided by WOAHP in order to mobilise national authorities and ensure leadership at national level so that the animal health sector is well involved in the One Health agenda, responsibilities regarding One Health are appropriately shared between the relevant sectors, and the contribution of the Veterinary Services to the national, regional and global health security is well recognised by all relevant actors;
8. Members invest in capacity building and training initiatives to enhance the skills and knowledge of the veterinary workforce including in the field of veterinary epidemiology ;
9. Members establish comprehensive and coordinated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the progress of implementation and to assess the impact of One Health initiatives effectively;
10. Members improve risk communication and community engagement strategies to enhance public awareness and engagement in One Health issues;
11. Members ensure risk-based prioritisation of actions highlighted in the OH JPA and improve financing and coordination strategies for effective implementation;
12. WOAHP continues working actively to ensure that the voice of Veterinary Services is heard in all relevant political fora in which the global health governance is discussed;
13. WOAHP continues to promote strong multisectoral collaboration with FAO, UNEP and WHO through the Quadripartite Collaboration on OH supported by the scientific advice of the OHHLEP;
14. WOAHP continues to provide support to Members through the PVS Pathway, especially through IHR-PVS National Bridging Workshops (NBWs) and other One Health operational tools developed under the Tripartite Zoonosis Guide to facilitate operationalisation of the One Health approach at national level ;

15. WIOAH encourages harmonised sub-regional and regional coordination mechanisms for providing technical support, knowledge and expertise sharing to Members.

## **17th Conference of WOAHA Regional Commission for Middle East**

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1 – 5 October 2023

### **Recommendation No 2**

#### **Ensuring strong performing and financially sustainable Veterinary Services in the Region**

CONSIDERING THAT:

16. Veterinary Services provide the fundamental management system for animal health and welfare and veterinary public health in WOAHA Members and play a crucial role in ensuring food security and safety and safeguarding health security by controlling animal diseases and tackling emerging zoonoses at their animal sources ;
17. Veterinary Services activities are expanding to embrace evolving trends and challenges, highlighting the need to develop skills and competencies to adapt to these changes;
18. Veterinary Services generate significant financial resources from services rendered and the need for increasing financial investments and funding for animal health and food safety;
19. The increasing risk of global health threats, particularly outbreaks of transboundary animal diseases and emerging zoonoses, can rapidly expand to affect multiple Members, highlighting the need for mutual assistance among Members and collective and coordinated preparedness and response, nationally, regionally and globally;
20. The Middle East region remains vulnerable to increased risk of introduction and spread of animal diseases and zoonoses via trade and cross border movements of animals and animal products;
21. Controlling transboundary animal diseases (such as PPR and FMD) of concern for the Middle East are a shared interest between infected and uninfected Members and should be considered as a global public good;
22. The PVS Pathway missions conducted over the past decade have shown that Veterinary Services are chronically under-funded in many Members with critical deficiencies in various competencies of the veterinary domain;
23. Members in the Middle East give a strategic importance to capacity building to develop and maintain a skilled, competent and appropriately resourced workforce in order to address the challenges facing national Veterinary Services in the region; and
24. During the 15th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Middle, Members were encouraged to facilitate the establishment of legal and administrative frameworks for effective, efficient and sustainable PPPs.



THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR MIDDLE EAST RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Members deploy all efforts to further invest in the animal health sector and the Veterinary Services to strengthen their governance, sustainability and capabilities to meet national, regional and international obligations, including with WOA, therefore contributing to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030;
2. Members develop a regional strategy creating an enabling environment for cooperation, collaboration and solidarity between the Members in the region and beyond to collectively address challenges facing the Veterinary Services including the risk of introduction and spread of diseases through uncontrolled cross border animal movements and regional and interregional trade.
3. Members further engage in the PVS pathway and implement the relevant PVS report recommendations to improve the capability of their Veterinary Services for effective control of the sanitary status of animals and animal products;
4. Members pursue their efforts to update and complete their legislative and regulatory frameworks to increase authority of each element in the veterinary domain, and to implement and enforce the overall animal health and welfare policies and strategies in compliance with WOA standards;
5. Members strengthen existing national financial mechanisms and actively seek alternative financial arrangements, for example engaging with the private sector and other relevant competent authorities to help leverage the necessary expertise and resources, developing advocacy packages to build the case for engagement and investment in animal health, while setting up priorities and generating additional revenue streams for long term sustainability;
6. Members commit to capacity building activities, in coordination with WOA and development partners to strengthen the competencies of public and private veterinary services for ensuring better animal health and welfare and safer trade in animals and animal products;
7. Members work actively with WOA and partners to utilise funding opportunities for building resilient and sustainable health systems including prevention, preparedness and response to pandemics, global strategies and initiatives and other global efforts such as prevention and control of AMR, global eradication of PPR and Rabies by 2030.
8. WOA continues to support Members through the PVS pathway and associated capacity building programmes to improve the performance of their VS particularly in management and regulatory aspects, strategic planning, animal health surveillance systems, laboratory capacities, disease control policies and trade in animals and animal products;
9. WOA works closely with partners such as FAO, WHO and UNEP, as well as resource partners to support Members in building the capacity of their Veterinary Services to effectively manage the risk of transboundary animal diseases and emerging zoonoses of global and regional concern; and
10. WOA continues through its Regional and Sub Regional Representations, and in collaboration with its global partners, support the Members to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination and maintain a regular dialogue on disease control policies and emerging regional issues pertaining to animal health and welfare, food security and global health security.