

# Opening remarks of Dr Markos Tibbo at the Regional Workshop on the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA)

Art Hotel and Resort, Manama, Bahrain

14-16 October 2025

- Your Excellency Eng Wael Bin Naser Al Mubarak Minister of Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture
- Your Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Secretary General
- Your Excellency Asem bin Abdelatif, Secretary General
- Your Excellency Hussein Aljemeli, Representative of AOAD
- Dr. Ahmad Almajali, WOAHA Regional Representative for the Middle East
- Dr Fajur Al Salloom, Director of Animal Health, Agriculture Affairs & Animal Wealth at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, Chief Veterinary Officer of Bahrain, and WOAHA Vice-president
- Distinguished colleagues, partners, and friends, all protocols observed!

It is a great honour to join you today for the **Regional Workshop on the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA)** on behalf of the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**. This workshop marks a pivotal moment for our region – a moment to reflect, align, and accelerate our collective efforts to operationalize One Health through the OH JPA.

This gathering is part of a broader movement led by the **Quadripartite collaboration – FAO, WHO, WOAHA, and UNEP** – to strengthen One Health implementation globally and regionally. In our region, this collaboration has been institutionalized through the **Regional Quadripartite One Health Platform**, which provides a structured mechanism for coordination, technical leadership, and joint action.

The Platform is guided by a **Regional Steering Committee**, supported by a **Regional Coordination Group**, and operationalized through **Technical Working Groups** on zoonotic diseases, AMR, and food safety. These structures ensure that our efforts are aligned with the **One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022–2026)** and responsive to country needs. FAO currently serves as the facilitator and secretariat of the Coordination Group, ensuring continuity and coherence across partners.

As **FAO commemorates this week 80 years of global leadership in food and agriculture**, we reaffirm our commitment to science, innovation, and partnerships as drivers of agrifood systems transformation. Our work under the One Health Programme Priority Area and the Global Framework for One Health in Agrifood Systems is focused on translating knowledge into action – from policy to practice, and from global strategy to local impact.

We are tackling complex challenges such as: Antimicrobial resistance; Emerging and endemic zoonoses; Food safety; Environmental degradation; and Biodiversity loss

These are not isolated issues — they are deeply interlinked, and they demand integrated, systems-based solutions. That is why FAO is investing in transdisciplinary science, cross-sectoral governance, and inclusive partnerships to build resilient agrifood systems that protect both people and the planet.

In the Middle East, FAO has played a pivotal role in advancing One Health through strategic partnerships and evidence-based interventions. Notable contributions include:

- Supporting the **government-led development of Qatar's One Health Framework** for emerging zoonotic disease preparedness, and contributing to a **meta-analysis on MERS-CoV prevalence in camels**, enhancing surveillance and risk mitigation.
- Partnering with **WHO in Oman** to conduct a **serological study on SARS-CoV-2 in camels and bovids**, strengthening pandemic preparedness.
- Leading **epidemiological studies in Bahrain**, including bovine tuberculosis screening in dairy herds to inform national disease control strategies.
- Collaborating with **national stakeholders in the UAE** to investigate **Brucella infections in camels and abattoir workers**, and conducting targeted studies on small ruminants to guide interventions.
- Co-authoring a **global narrative review of pandemic zoonotic RNA viruses** with UAE University, contributing to scientific foresight.
- Working with **ADAFSA** under the FAO-supported MDF program to study **SARS-CoV-2 in livestock**, and with **JUST University** to review key zoonotic diseases in the GCC and Yemen.
- Supporting the conference honoring **International Year of Camelids celebration and contribution to food security in Kuwait**, and delivering **One Health curriculum workshops in Jordan**, **GEMP sessions**, **hands-on training on camel brucellosis diagnostics in UAE**, and public awareness materials on **tick-borne disease prevention** in collaboration with ADAFSA.
- Draft Saudi's Animal Health Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2034 that has a major component on One Health.

These initiatives reflect FAO's commitment to operationalizing One Health through regional leadership, scientific collaboration, and capacity building. The efforts demonstrate that One Health is not just a concept — it is a practical, impactful approach that is already delivering results in our region.

As we engage in this workshop, let us seize the opportunity to strengthen collaboration, align national strategies with the OH JPA, and shape a regional roadmap that reflects our shared priorities and capacities.

Together, under the leadership of the Quadripartite and with the commitment of all sectors, we can build a healthier, safer, and more sustainable future for all.

**Thank you.**