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## Opening Remarks by the Director of AU-IBAR

**ECOWAS Annual Regional Animal Health Networks (RAHN)**

**19-23 September 2022**

**Theme: “Horizon 2030: situation, challenges and prospects for the eradication of PPR and Rabies and the control of foot and mouth disease and CBPP, priority animal diseases in the ECOWAS region”**

**Minister of Agriculture and Environment, H. E. Dr. Gilberto Silva;**

**Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, ECOWAS Commission; H.E. Excellency Mrs. Massandjé TOURE-LITSE**

**ECOWAS Country Representative for Cape Verde**

**Dr. Karim Tounkara, OIE Representative for Africa**

**Dr. Baba Soumare, Global Coordinator of FAO-ECTAD**

**Dr. Vivian Iwar, Executive Director of the Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC-Bamako)**

**Representative of USDA/APHIS-West Africa**

**Regional Director of Brooke West Africa, Mr. Emmanuel Sarr**

**Directors of Veterinary Services from MS**

**Focal points of RESEPI and RESOLAB**

**National Delegates from Members States**

**Experts from various organizations**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning.**

1. On behalf of H.E Ambassador Josefa Sacko, the Commissioner for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) of the African Union Commission, I bring warm greetings to the Government and the People of Cape Verde, ECOWAS Commission/ RAHC and to welcome you all to the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Animal Health Meeting in this beautiful capital Praia, Cape Verde.
2. First of all, I would like to congratulate **H. E. Mrs. Massandjé TOURE-LITSE** on her appointment as the new Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture; Congratulations and best wishes for our continued collaboration and partnership.
3. I wish also to take this opportunity to express AU-IBAR's appreciation to the ECOWAS/RAHC, FAO, World organization for

Animal Health (WOAH), Brooke West Africa and USDA/APHIS for the partnership in organising this meeting and for standing with us in many regional and continental initiatives in Animal Resources development in Africa. Please allow me to also appreciate the commitment and the interest of the Government of Cape Verde in the animal and fishery resources sector which is one of the pillars of its economy. I thank you all for the individual and collective efforts towards making this important event a success.

#### **4. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The African continent is endowed with a huge animal resource and over half (53%) of all African households keep livestock, with 72% of the rural poor depending on the sector to some level. In Africa, livestock are very crucial to food and nutrition security, livelihoods, poverty alleviation and economic growth. Livestock alone accounts for over half of the agricultural capital stock in Africa and on average accounts for 30% of the agricultural GDP. ECOWAS and the Sahel region are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest animal resource populations after the East African region. This clearly indicates that there is huge potential in this sector and the market exists for the resources.

5. However, animal health challenges continue to be a major constraint to the development of the animal resources sector in this region and the whole of Africa. As a result, high-impact transboundary animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease,

contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, PPR and Rabies, among others, continue to have a negative impact on livestock production, food and nutrition security, and trade. Many successful interventions to address animal health challenges have been undertaken in the past by Member States, inter-governmental institutions including AU-BAR, RECs, OIE, FAO, Development partners and Research Institutions such as ILRI to mention just a few. These collaborative and concerted interventions have had positive impacts in addressing many animal health related issues and they have enhanced the livelihoods of animal resource dependent communities and national economies. The animal health challenges that confront Africa and the region are numerous and no one institution or country can address them alone. Smart Partnerships afford us an opportunity to tackle issues of mutual concern in a concerted and unified manner. This is the only way to maximize our resources for amplified impact. It is in this regard that I commend the partnership between the RAHC, FAO, WOA, AU-PANVAC and AU-IBAR among others.

## **6. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

I commend the theme of this years 8<sup>th</sup> RAHN meeting: **“Horizon 2030: situation, challenges and prospects for the eradication of PPR and Rabies; and the control of foot and mouth disease and CBPP, priority animal diseases in the ECOWAS region”**. This reflects the animal health situation on the landscape and our collective aspirations. In the recent past, AU-BAR supported Nigeria

to address the issue of HPAI and it is currently supporting Cape Verde to demonstrate its freedom status for recognition as PPR and FMD free country by the WOAHA in 2023. I assure you that AU-IBAR together with AU-PANVAC remains committed to supporting all countries in the fight against priority animal diseases and will continued to maintain strategic partnerships with FAO, WOAHA, the RAHC and all stake holders to deliver the needed support to our Member States.

7. Finally, I would like to specially thank the Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, ECOWAS Commission; H.E. Excellency Mrs. Massandjé TOURE-LITSE; His Excellency the Minister Agriculture and Environment, Dr. Gilberto Silva; the entire ECOWAS/RAHC and Directorate of Veterinary Services team as well as all the stakeholders for your individual and collective efforts for the good organization and effective holding of this workshop.
8. I look forward to continued partnerships with all stakeholders in our collective pursuit to improve animal and health and welfare in all Member States.
9. And with these remarks, I wish you all very pleasant and successful deliberations. I thank you very much for your kind attention

**Viva Regional Cooperation**

**May God Bless You All!**

**May God bless Africa!!!**