



**REMARKS BY H.E AMBASSADOUR JOSEFA LEONEL CORREIA SACKO
COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT BLUE ECONOMY
AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT (DARBE) OF THE AFRICA UNION
COMMISSION.**

25th Conference of the Regional Commission for Africa, 20th to 24th February,
2023, Gaborone, Botswana

- Y.E. Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana
- Hon. Ministers in charge of Agriculture and livestock
- Y. E. Dr Monique Eloit, Director General of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH)
- Y.E. Mr. Elias M. Magosi, Executive Secretary of SADC
- Y. E. Dr Mabela Honore N’Lemba, President, WOAH Regional Commission for Africa and WOAH Delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Y. E. Dr Hugo Federico Idoyaga Benítez, President of the WOAH World Assembly of Delegates and WOAH Delegate of Paraguay
- Representatives from RECs
- CVO/WOAH Delegates from Member States
- Representatives from Veterinary Education Establishments
- Experts
- Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, all Protocol observed

1. It is my pleasure and honour to address this Assembly at the 25th Conference of World Organization for Animal Health Regional Commission for Africa that marks another step in the journey towards the development and reinforcement of veterinary services for sustainable animal resources development in Africa.

2. Your Excellency, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat and the Commissioner, Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and sustainable Environment (ARBE), I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Your Excellency, and the People of the Republic of Botswana for hosting this important conference. This is a clear demonstration of the commitment and the interest that the Government and the people of the Republic of Botswana gives to the animal resource sector which is one of the key pillars of the economy. **Thank you.**

3. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Monique Eloit, the Director General of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and Her team for organizing this meeting, and for WOAHS continued collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) for the development of Animal Resources in the continent especially in the area of animal health.

4. I am particularly pleased with the tripartite partnership between WOAHS and FAO under the umbrella of GF-TADs Africa that brings together a coalition of likeminded organizations to address animal health challenges on the Continent. Director General of WOAHS, thank you for the vision and effort towards ensuring the re-operationalization of the Regional GF-TADs for Africa and the continuous revitalization of the Regional Commission of Africa.

5. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our technical and development partners for Joining the AUC to mark the 70th Anniversary of AU-IBAR and the 10th anniversary of Rinderpest eradication on the 17-18th March 2022 in Nairobi. The commemoration was held under the theme: '70

years of harnessing political support, partnerships and enhancing coordination for animal resources development in Africa'. The main objective of the commemoration was to celebrate the partnership support to AU-IBAR for the development of Animal Resources in Africa. The anniversary was a huge success and a clear demonstration of the value given to partnerships by the AUC: **because together 'We Can'**.

6. **Your Excellency, Honorable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen**, It is without doubt that animal resources contribute immensely to food and nutrition security, livelihoods and the socioeconomic development of Africa. To provide some statistics; a third of the Africa's population (over 470 million people) are directly dependent on livestock; about 13 million people are employed in fisheries & aquaculture and 200 million people rely on fish as their main source of protein and animal resources contribute significantly to Agricultural Gross Domestic Product. Africa's animal resources also provide a pathway for building resilience to the climate challenges the continent is currently facing.
7. The continent however, is yet to tap the full potential of its animal resources largely due to our failure to fully harness the opportunities available and address key challenges such as animal health. As a continent we need to change this narrative and catalyze investments from the public and private sectors in line with the CAADP/Malabo commitments in order to realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063, the 'Africa We Want'.
8. Investments are urgently needed to address the weak animal health systems in majority of our countries to enhance the animal sector's resilience, if the

Covid-19 experience is anything to go by. It is estimated that Africa's animal health burden accounts for 25% of costs and losses annually in livestock production. Investments to strengthen the capacity for preparedness, control and response against animal health risks would go a long way towards fostering sustainable growth, within the sector.

9. Furthermore, there are growing concerns on our ability to harness new opportunities in apiculture and aquatic animal production. Bee diseases, such as the Colony Collapse Disorder continue to pose a threat to the continent's food and nutrition security as bees are pollinators of a number of important food, cash and pasture crops. Aquatic health is another key challenge the continent need to address if its fisheries sector is to grow.

10. Your Excellency, Honorable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, AUC has taken the eradication of PPR as a priority policy issue as articulated in the Pan African Strategy for the eradication of PPR and the control of other priority small ruminants diseases; and the Pan African Programme for the eradication of PPR (2023-2027) that was recently endorsed by the Ministers in Charge of animal resources development. The Ministers in charge of animal resources, during the launch of the Pan African PPR Programme recently made the Nairobi Declaration on the Eradication of *Peste des Petits Ruminants* by 2030 *that urges the AU Commission, RECS, Member States and Partners to renew and enhance commitments to the eradication of PPR and to ensure that the continued presence of the disease in Africa does not derail the attainment of the target for its global eradication by 2030*

11. Your Excellency, Honorable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is also critical that the Continent does not lose the momentum created to eradicate PPR by 2030 and to eliminate dog mediated rabies by 2030. I therefore, call for **‘Fostering a Broad Coalition for the Eradication of PPR and Control of other Priority Small Ruminant Diseases in Africa’**. The successful eradication of PPR and the control of the other important small ruminant diseases in Africa will position the livestock sector as a major economic driver for the sustainable transformation of livelihoods, and eradication of poverty particularly for livestock-dependent communities in Africa. It is essential that the provision of quantity and quality PPR vaccines for the eradication PPR in Africa be done through strengthening of the African Vaccine Laboratories including private vaccine production laboratories to ensure self-sufficiency of Africa in PPR vaccine production.

12. Your Excellency, Honorable Minister, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. As I conclusion I wish to reiterate AUC’s commitment to undertake coordinated actions, advocate and lobby for sufficient resources to strengthen veterinary systems for prevention and control of key animal and zoonotic diseases; ensure safety of animal source foods following the One Health and One Welfare paradigms; and finally to support the harmonization efforts and capacity building in order to manage animal health and related threats on the continent.

13. I wish you fruitful deliberations and I thank you all for your kind Attention.

Viva the Regional and International Cooperation; May God Bless you All;

May God Bless Africa!

**Dr. Nick Douglas Nwankpa, Ag. Director AU-IBAR and Director AU-PANVAC on
behalf of the Commissioner of DARBE**