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Animal Health Strategy for Africa: Putting Africa in the World Animal Resource Economy



AU-IBAR embarks on the development of regional animal welfare strategies



Eastern Africa Experts meet to explore ways to improve animal health delivery systems

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**@AU-IBAR, 2020**

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# Editorial/ Welcome

**T**he animal health and welfare sector faces major challenges affecting its productivity, growth and sustainability. Some of these include: High disease burden, Veterinary governance, Institutional and human resource capacities, Inputs, markets and trade, Research, technology and knowledge management, Investment and partnerships, and Emerging issues of public health concern at the animal-human-environment interfaces.

The African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources and other stakeholders have identified priority areas for strengthening the animal resources sector, as identified through six strategic areas highlighted in the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (2019-2035). These include: (1) Strengthening animal health policy and institutional frameworks; (2) Reducing disease risks and impacts on animals, humans and environment; (3) Strengthening animal health interventions to address current and emerging issues of public health concern at the human-animal-environment interfaces, (4) Improving capacities, access to inputs, markets and trade in animal resources, (5) Strengthening science, innovation, research and knowledge management; and (6) Enhancing partnerships, investment and resourcing of the animal health sector.

AU-IBAR is addressing these challenges through a series of activities that are being implemented in close collaboration with other African partners, including Regional Economic Communities, Departments of Veterinary Services in African Union Member States. From 2019 going forth a number of activities have been carried out to support the implementation of the Animal Health Strategy for Africa and to address the aforementioned challenged. In addition, the emerging field of Animal welfare, through the animal Welfare Strategy for Africa is providing direction in ensuring that animals are treated as sentient beings through the implementation of good animal welfare practices for a competitive and sustainable animal resource

sector. This edition provides an overview of the Animal Health Strategy for Africa.

Other articles included highlight some activities that have supported these efforts towards strengthening animal health and welfare, and include: Providing opportunities in the delivery of animal health services; strengthening continental and regional Animal Health Networks, such as the East Africa Regional Animal Health Network (EA-RAHN); and elevating the role of the animal sector in mitigating COVID-19 Containment measures.

With the emergence of COVID-19, there is greater awareness that protecting animals, protects people and the environment. The adaptation of the one-health approach has continued to create solutions that recognise and take advantage of the inter-connectivity between humans, animals and the environment.

The increase in zoonotics, and other emerging diseases from animals, calls for increased monitoring and management of animal resources to better anticipate transmission before it occurs. Additionally, One Health has also been seen to offer fresh ideas for addressing antimicrobial resistance. Throughout the food chain, animal health measures will be deemed critical in transforming safe animal trade and ensuring food safety.

Stakeholder engagement has remained at the fore of AU-IBAR's activity and programme implementation. This kind of collaboration has led to the successful management of animal resources. We would like to thank our various stakeholders, and key programme donors, such as the European Union who have worked hand-in-hand to prevent disease outbreaks across species and across the continent.

**Ahmed Elsawalhy**  
**Director, AU-IBAR**

# Animal Health Strategy for Africa: Putting Africa in the World Animal Resource Economy

By Ahmed A. El-Sawalhy, Director, AU-IBAR

Africa is endowed with diverse livestock, aquatic animals and wildlife resources, which are critical to supporting incomes, livelihoods, nutrition, food security, and resilience in much of the continent. On average, livestock alone contributes 35% of the national agricultural GDP. Despite abundant animal resources, Africa remains

the world's poorest and most underdeveloped continent due to various causes including, deadly diseases, poor governance and insufficient compliance with international health regulations (IHR) and legislation, climate change and the vulnerability of actors in the sector.

In view of the above, any effort to reduce food insecurity, mal-

nutrition, poverty and build resilience should also focus on the animal resource sector. The status of animal health and welfare is among the major challenges affecting the productivity, growth and sustainability of the sector. For instance, the majority of the 117 World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) listed diseases and infections in 2018 are



endemic in Africa. In addition, there is a high prevalence of OIE non-listed diseases that are impacting negatively on the productivity and welfare of animals and their resilience to climate change and also posing public health challenges Africans. In economic terms, animal diseases have major impacts through direct loss of animals, high cost of treatment, lowered productivity and market disruptions.

According to the 2016 FAO Report on economic analysis of animal diseases, African farmers lose over USD 2 billion annually due to Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) alone. Zoonotic diseases, as shown by the 2013-2016 Ebola epidemic in Western Africa and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, can have long-term devastating impacts on the economies of countries. Implementing effective strategies for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases is necessary to avoid such losses. Therefore, effective and efficient delivery of animal health services is central to the required improvements in animal health, animal production and productivity, safety of foods of animal origin, public health and a healthy environment.

To address the challenges in the animal resources sector in Africa, the Africa Union-Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), specialized technical office of the African Union Commission (AUC), consulted partners among them the Regional Economic Communities, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), Research institutions, academia and various stakeholders to develop the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA). The strategy, validated in November 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, has been endorsed by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee which comprised the ministers in

charge of animal resources, water, agriculture and environment. The strategy was approved by the Heads of States summit in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA) 2018-2035 is “a continental framework for delivering a sustainable animal health system that meets global standards Healthy animals for enhanced livelihoods, safe trade public and environmental health”. It aims to address the challenges facing animal health service delivery in the African continent. It is aligned to the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA) and further provides more focused strategic interventions and approaches to address bee and aquatic health in a holistic manner in the context of the One Health (OH) approach. It also aims to harmonize delivery of animal health services in the continent with relevant global, continental and regional strategies and frameworks and therefore serves as an overarching strategy to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of animal health interventions in the continent.

The strategy aims to address the challenges on delivery of animal health services in a harmonized way within the context of the One-Health approach which is a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and trans-disciplinary approach, for working locally, nationally, regionally, and globally, to achieve optimal health and well-being of all animals, people, plants and their shared environment, recognizing as well their inextricable interconnections. Africa's One-Health approach includes endemic neglected diseases and strengthening of inter-sectoral linkages along the public-animal-environment health interfaces.

AHSA is expected to contribute to achieving the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Malabo declaration on accelerated agriculture growth and

transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods (Assembly/AU/decl. 1(XXIII), the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, and the Feed Africa Strategy. In addition, the AHSA will contribute to the objectives of the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA), Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture (PFRS), African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation on Wild Flora and Fauna, and the Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa among others.

The implementation of AHSA will lead to improved capacity to anticipate and mitigate the negative impacts of animal diseases, zoonosis, climate change, and disasters for healthy and productive animal populations and increased access to regional and international markets for African animals and animal products. It will also lead to improved engagement of all value chain actors taking into account gender inclusivity and youth in animal resource development for enhanced economic development and social welfare of African populations; thus “putting Africa in the World Animal Resource Economy”.

*With contributions from: (Prof. James Wabacha, Animal Health Expert; and Mr. Hiver Boussini, Animal Health – AU IBAR)*

# 4<sup>th</sup> AAW Conference roots for natural solutions in addressing development challenges



**T**he 4th African Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) was an excellent opportunity for various stakeholders to review animal welfare, wildlife and environmental conservation, human and animal health, and sustainable development in Africa.

Delegates at the online conference held in September 2020 sought to relook the role of natural solutions in curing food insecurity and food safety concerns to address the emerging trend of factory farming in the continent. Discussions also focused on the role of governments, individuals, organizations, and communities in achieving responsible use of animals, improving animal welfare, and supporting environmental conservation in Africa. The conference theme was “Animal welfare, wildlife and envi-

ronmental conservation for sustainable development in Africa: Enhancing nature-based solutions.” The theme was aligned to Agenda 2063, Africa’s strategic framework for delivering inclusive and sustainable development goals.

Held virtually due to travel and social distancing restrictions implemented to curb the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the conference also took full cognizance of the effects of the disease in the health, economic and social spheres of life. Based on lessons learned, participants designed urgent actions to avert any such occurrences in the future.

The AAWC is an annual forum co-hosted by Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) in

collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR).

The conference brought together 524 delegates comprising professionals and practitioners from 53 countries who shared experiences, research and study findings, strategies, innovations and opportunities in the disciplines of animal welfare, wildlife and environmental conservation. The delegates included representatives of Regional Economic Communities, Directors of Veterinary Services, Animal Production Services and Wildlife Conservation/Management Services from African Union Member States, and experts from various institutions and civil society organizations.

AU-IBAR Director and Head of

Mission Prof. Ahmed El-Sawalhy hailed the conference as “ another unique milestone towards the integration of animal welfare in sustainable animal resources development in Africa.’

He acknowledged the relationship between UNEP, AU-IBAR and ANAW and the support from conference partners, Prof. El-Sawalhy restated the theme and noted its connection with the African Union Agenda 2063, which is a blueprint of Africa’s development and transformation.

“Human beings, animals and the environment are inseparable owing to the fact that animals make a major contribution to people’s well-being. This is a key reason why AU-IBAR considered animal welfare as an integral part of sustainable intervention for safeguarding the mutual relationship between human beings, animals and the environment,” he said.

AU-IBAR has been providing key support in “Integrating the welfare interests of human and animals in Africa” by closely collaborating with key stakeholders to spearhead the implementation of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) in line with the proposed Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) and the Animal Welfare standards of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), while taking the African context into account. Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) Board Chair Prof. James Nkansah Obrempong noted that the conference was a great opportunity to discuss issues relating to animal welfare and more particularly those in line with conference theme.

Prof. Obrempong urged delegates to explore ways and solutions that would enhance and protect animals and nature. He called on everyone to reflect on their indigenous knowledge and how nature was part and parcel

of their day to day lives. UNEP Civil Society Unit Chief Alexander Juras recognized the conferences immediate achievements realized through tremendous growth and increase in diversity of participants including NGOs, academia, private sector and government representatives; quality of its delivery and content; and impact in the continent.

He highlighted the connection the conference theme and that of the upcoming UNEA5 in 2021, which is “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”

He observed that the virtual conference proved to have many advantages such as allowing for more participation and outreach; creating more equality among participants; allowing more flexibility in terms of time; and, the appreciation that the ecological footprint is much smaller than that of physical meetings.

The conference’s interaction was designed and delivered through oral presentations, which were neatly augmented with panel discussions and interspersed with question and answer sessions.

At the end of the deliberations, delegates called for a ban on introducing of intensive production, factory farming, and industrial systems in Africa, advocating for the development of

animal welfare-based policies and legislation to prevent the emerging trend.

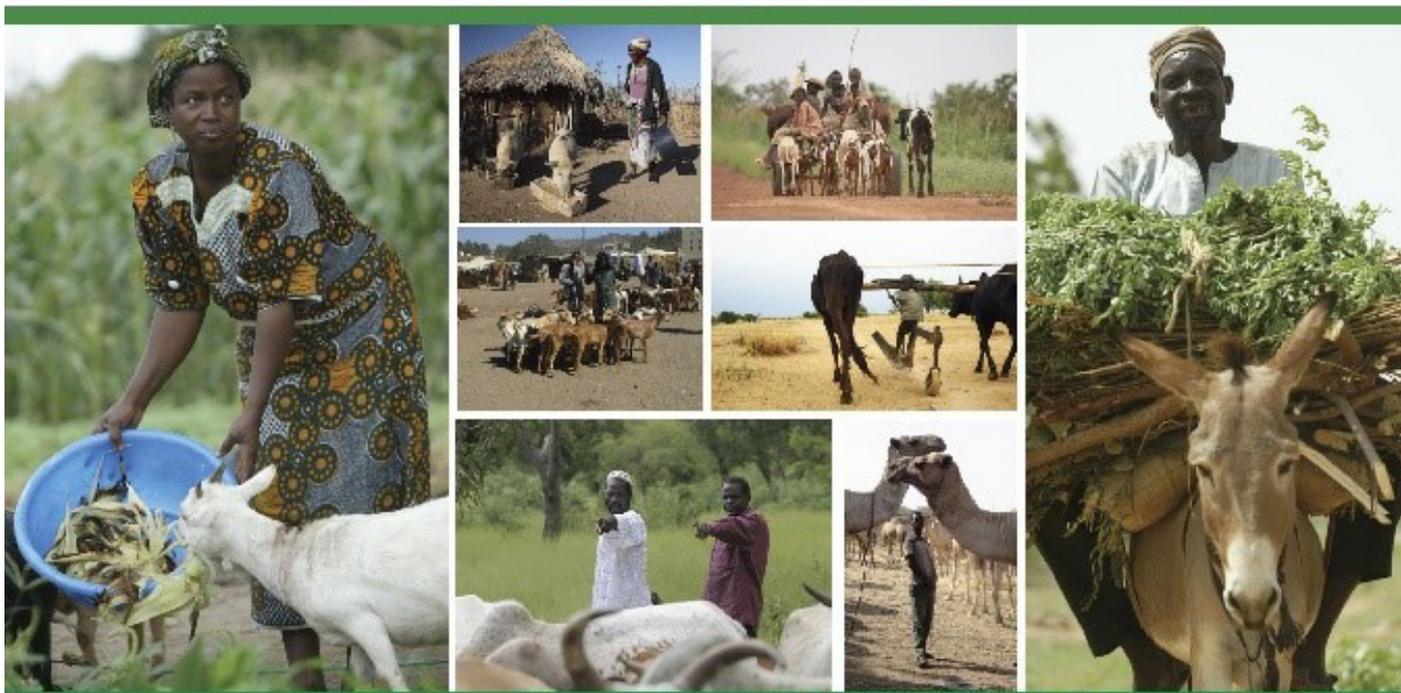
They also urged African governments to support the process of developing and securing the adoption of an Animal Welfare resolution at UNEA and to confirm their support for the Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare as an African Union resolution to the United Nations General Assembly.

Other recommendations were to integrate animal welfare into the development agenda at the global, regional, national and local levels and promote of nutritional and food security value of indigenous food crops and livestock, especially in the fragile ecosystems of the expansive arid and semi-arid lands of Africa.

Governments, CSOs and NGOs were also encouraged to take utilise digital technology for education, sensitization and public awareness to enhance animal welfare and environmental integrity. This was in cognisance of how COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the opportunity to use digital platforms for communication and availed innovative and resilient ways of how society interacts, exchanges information and transacts business.



## ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY FOR AFRICA (AWSA)



# AU-IBAR embarks on the development of regional animal welfare strategies

**T**he African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is working with key stakeholders in animal resources sector to formulate Regional Animal Health and Welfare Strategies for central and northern parts of the continent.

The regional strategies for Central Africa and Northern Africa will be in line with the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), and its aim to develop the capacity of national and regional institutions to coordinate cross-country and cross-regional animal welfare improvement efforts in Central Africa. The strategies will enhance partnerships with a range of stakeholders including the private sector, farming communities, civil societies, regional organizations, international organizations and the donor community to ensure good animal welfare

practices for a competitive and sustainable animal resource industry in the two regions.

The initiative follows the approval of the AWSA by the AU Heads of States and Governments of the AU summit in January 2019. It was recommended that the implementation of the strategy be cascaded at national and regional levels.

The AWSA provides a framework for the joint and coordinated promotion of animal welfare practices for responsible and sustainable livestock development of on the continent.

AU-IBAR is providing support to the Economic Commission for Central Africa States (ECCAS) to develop their regional animal welfare strategy for central Africa (RWAS-CA) in line with the continental strategy. In Northern Africa

AU-IBAR is mandated to support and coordinate

the sustainable development and utilization of animal resources (livestock, fisheries and wildlife) to enhance nutrition and food security and contribute to the people's wellbeing and prosperity in the African Union Member States.

AU-IBAR led a cross-section of stakeholders in the livestock sector and recognized animal welfare organisations in Africa to formulate the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA). The AWSA provides a framework for the collective and coordinated promotion of animal welfare practices for responsible and sustainable development of the

livestock on the continent.

The search for consultants to develop the strategies was announced in October and November, 2020. The consultants are tasked with translating the strategy into action plans for its effective implementation.

The process guiding the development of the regional strategies is consultative and participatory. It will build on the experiences and best practice from Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ongoing animal welfare strategy development process. It also involves the

analysis of knowledge, practice and compliance to various animal welfare, and related policies, statutes, and standards including World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) standards in Africa. While addressing the Southern Africa Regional Animal Welfare Summit in Cape Town in November 2019, Dr Annie Lewa, the AU-IBAR's Senior Projects and Programs Officer, noted the regional animal welfare strategies will emphasise on fostering a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach ensuring good animal welfare practices in different contexts and situations in Africa.

"It will also provide guidance to countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and stakeholders on priority intervention areas in animal welfare based on the African context," Dr. Lewa said.

The summit was part of AU-IBAR's continued support to ensure awareness creation, sensitization and implementation of the AWSA, and backing the Africa Platform on Animal Welfare (APAW) endorsed in 2017 to transform the animal resources industry through adoption of good animal welfare practices for the human wellbeing, sustainable livelihoods, poverty reduction and economic growth.

AWSA's objectives include attaining behavior change, educate, inform, promote awareness, advocacy and good practices aligned to OIE standards, strengthen effective action on animal welfare (technologies, human resources, research, animal care, contribution to standard settings) and mainstreaming animal welfare in policies, strategies, legislation, investments, programmes and projects.



## ANIMAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR AFRICA (AHSA) 2018-2035



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# Animal Health Strategy for Africa



# AU-IBAR joins bid to strengthen Animal health networks in West Africa

## Virtual workshop held in partnership with ECOWAS Commission, FAO validates five-year retrospective assessment study report on the laboratory and epidemio-surveillance networks and the proposition of multiyear planning draft

The African Union Inter-Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) partnered with the ECOWAS Commission through the Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC), Bamako, and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to organize the annual animal health networks workshop in September 2020.

The annual workshop, which was held remotely using the Zoom platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions, brought together animal health experts, production networks, senior regional government officials and representatives of various development partners. The forum is used as a platform to strengthen the networks and explore avenues for their sustainability.

The regional networks include the Veterinary Laboratory Network (RESOLAB-Réseau de Laboratoires) and the Epidemio-Surveillance Network (RESEPI-Réseau d'Epidemio-surveillance), and the Regional Veterinary Committee (RVC) composed of the Directors of Veterinary Services to provide strategic guidance on regional collaboration and coordination of efforts for the control of transboundary animal diseases (TADs). They were established by the ECOWAS Commission and FAO based on a regional approach.

The Commission also identified regional livestock producer/professional organizations including Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage au Sahel et en Savane (APESS), Center for Animal Resources and Development (CARD), Confederation of Traditional Cattle Breeders (CORET) and Ré-

seau Bilital Maroobé (RBM) to reach-out to producers directly for better understanding of challenges. This will also help in developing and implementing policies that support their livestock production activities.

The two-day workshop was aimed at reviewing and validating regional policy documents and assessing progress on the recommendations of the 2019 annual workshop held in Bamako, Mali. It was also an opportunity to provide updates on the implementation of the recommendations of the previous workshop and key achievements of FAO/ECTAD-GHSA.

The five-year retrospective assessment study report on the laboratory and epidemio-surveillance networks and the proposition of multiyear planning draft were reviewed and validated during the online meeting. Other documents discussed and validated were the Regional Animal Health and Welfare Strategy, Animal Health and Welfare Regulation, and the Regional PPR, FMD, ASF and Rabies control strategies.

Participants also explored various approaches on how to expand existing laboratory and surveillance assessment tools to other non GHSA countries.

They also received updates on-going projects in the ECOWAS sub-region and discussed synergies to be built among the various animal health networks. The workshop involved slide presentations, plenary discussions, group work, formulation of roadmap and report writing.





# COVID-19: Call to elevate animal resources sector to the frontline

**C** OVID-19: Call to elevate animal resources sector to the frontline

Africa's animal resources sector needs be recognized as a provider of essential and frontline services and goods in the fight against COVID-19 to protect its contribution to food and nutrition security of most vulnerable populations, stakeholders recommend.

The stakeholders concur that while containment measures focus on preserving human health, inadvertently impacting negatively on economic sectors, the animal resources sector provides essential services warranting greater attention and investment. Elevating the sector to the frontline in addressing and mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, they say, will mainstream it to attract support from stimulus packages

to help recovery and build resilience.

The call was made during the AU-IBAR Online Consultative Meeting on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Animal Resources Sector in Africa and Identification of Mitigation Measures held on 21st May 2020. The meeting delved into the impact of COVID-19 on sector, outlining key weaknesses and factors that have rendered it vulnerable to containment measures.

In a communique released at the end of the one-day meeting, the delegates outlined priority actions to better understand the impacts of the pandemic, and protect the contributions of the sector to the continent's development and growth.

They urged AU member states, regional economic communities, AU-IBAR and other stakeholders

to mobilise resources to ensure the contribution of the animal resources sector to livelihoods, food and nutritional security is protected and supported;

They observed that given the high mobility and human interaction in the animal resources sector, and the handling of animals and perishable goods, protocols need to be developed to ensure safety of actors and enhance implementation of sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures and food safety and hygiene

To strengthen mitigation of COVID-19 impacts, the delegates resolved that coordinated actions in the animal resources sector across the continent be initiated under the leadership of AU-IBAR;

They also urged member states and regional economic communities to adopt and implement

policies, strategies and legislation on One Health. Prioritization of funding to buttress and protect input and food supply chains, enhance diversification and transformation of products and marketing channels was also highlighted in the communique.

On accessing COVID-19 stimulus packages and integrating long term approaches, the meeting resolved that African youth be involved at the forefront of post COVID-19 animal resources development. This will provide jobs, and support innovation to generate technologies that entail new ways of doing business.

To fast track trade, they recommended the promotion E-commerce as a means of reducing the impact of the disease on trade and marketing of animal commodities.

In his opening remarks, AU-IBAR's Director Prof. Ahmed El-sawalhy cited the critical role the institution has played, in convening and organizing stakeholders, resource mobilization, building strategic partnerships, human resource development and technical backstopping. This, he said, has ensure a more coordinated and effective response to some of the biggest challenges the continent's animal resources sector has faced in the past including epidemics.

The African Union Commission (AUC) Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture H.E. Ambassador Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko highlighted the unprecedented loss of jobs that could plunge millions of Africans back into extreme poverty, and the possibility that the continent slipping into a recession for the first time.

She underscored the importance of the agriculture sector for addressing the impacts of COVID-19 and called for an understanding of the socio-economic

impacts and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures in the sector.

The meeting was attended by 150 participants from 50 countries, regional economic communities, specialized regional institutions in animal resources and continental and regional agribusiness associations and animal resources value chain actors. Representatives of the European Union (EU), African Development Bank (AfDB), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) also attended.



# Eastern Africa Experts meet to explore ways to improve animal health delivery systems

**T**here is a need to support capacity building for risk assessment along with regional dairy, live animal, and meat value chains and strengthen the related veterinary capacities to improve animal health delivery systems in Eastern Africa.

This will also require increased advocacy for buy-in and resource mobilization to support animal health networks in the region.

These are part of the recommendations made during the 10th Annual Eastern Africa Regional Animal Health Network (EA-RAHN) Virtual Meeting to enhance Trans-Boundary Animal Disease (TADs) control in the region.

The two-day EA-RAHN meeting held in October 2020 was organized by Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) through the Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) in collaboration with AU-IBAR, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and OIE. It brought together chief veterinary officers (CVOs), epidemiologists, and laboratory heads, from the 12 IGAD member

countries. It was also attended by technical staff from the regional quarantine network, and other relevant institutions.

Delegates observed that African Swine Fever policies and legislation have been neglected, and required strengthening. They also called for increased awareness of biosecurity in the pig value chain from the farm to the fork; and review of the In-Service Applied Epidemiology Training (IS-AVET) curriculum to ensure that it demand-driven. These observations were made during the opening remarks of AU-IBAR's Director, Prof. Ahmed El-sawalhy. He noted that animal health surveillance, risk assessment and early warning of potential disease outbreaks all rely on timely information sharing among the key stakeholders.

Sharing of information is key to improving the development of disease control strategies and addressing other public health threats at local, national, regional and international levels, he further noted.



Welcome remarks were also made by Dr. Ricarda Mondry, representing FAO's Sub-regional Office for East Africa (FAOSFE), Dr. Samuel Wakhusama, of OIE Eastern Africa and Dr. SJM Munyua (ICPALD Director). The regional meeting was opened by Dr. Harry Oyas on behalf of the Chief Veterinary Officer, Kenya.

Speakers underscored the crucial role of existing national and regional surveillance (epidemiology and laboratory) systems and networks in gathering quality disease and AMR/AMU data, and providing sound epidemiological and risk interpretation for informed action.

The annual EA-RAHN meeting offers a platform for information sharing among regional animal health networks. It also provides a forum for scientists and policy makers converge to explore how they can jointly facilitate the implementation of effective and efficient animal health interventions in the region. Delegates called for more training on Sanitary and

Phytosanitary (SPS) measures in all countries in the region to support trade and food safety and resource mobilization to operationalize the seven signed cross border Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in IGAD MS.

They also vouched for mainstreaming of Animal Welfare in policies, legislation, investments, programme and projects at national and regional levels.-

Other recommendations contained in the workshop communique are the need to identify and integrate Apiculture and Fisheries/Aquaculture Sector actors in the EA-RAHN and to promote increased cross border SPS controls (quarantine, inspection, joint surveillance, disease prevention and control for TADs) to reduce non-tariff trade barriers IGAD member states are Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda.



# Low investments affecting animal health delivery systems

**L**ow investments and lack of a young workforce are the major factors hindering delivery of animal health services in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and several parts of Central Africa.

According to animal health experts from DRC, the political turmoil that has been witnessed in the country for more than a decade has made it difficult for the government to give attention to issues like animal health hence low budgets for the sector.

DRC Chief Veterinary Officer Dr. N'Lemba Mabela Honoré says

the private sector has also been reluctant to invest in the animal resource development sector despite the critical role livestock play in economic development and improvement of livelihoods.

On personnel, Dr. Mabela notes that most vets and other animal health experts currently serving the region are in their advanced age hence there is a likelihood of a huge gap once they retire.

“Unless urgent measures are undertaken to interest and train more youth in animal health issues like laboratory and epidemiology, we will be left with a huge gap that will spell doom to animal

resources development in the region,” he says.

The animal health system and services in the majority of African countries remains weak as demonstrated by the findings of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) PVS/ Gap analysis studies carried out in the recent years before and during the implementation of the VetGov Project between 2012 and 2017.

The sector also suffers from weak and outdated legislation, incoherent policy, poor enforcement of regulations, low and inconsistent funding, fragmentation





with poor collaboration between public and private sector actors, poor access to quality veterinary drugs by animal owners, inadequate manpower which is further exacerbated by the poor distribution and deployment of existing manpower.

This situation is to blame for the high prevalence of transboundary animal diseases in the continent. Animal health service provision in many African countries also does not meet the demands of animal owners and consumers to safeguard human and animal health.

These were some of the observations made during a regional workshop for the Development of Road Maps for Strengthening Animal Health Delivery Services and Management of Priority Trans-Boundary Animal Diseases (TADs) in West and Central

Africa held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2019.

The workshop organized by AU-IBAR was aimed at highlighting key gaps and opportunities in the delivery of animal health services in the two regions. Emphasis was on key issues that cut across the majority of Member States in the two regions for targeted interventions under the Live2Africa Programme.

The workshop also proposed roadmaps for addressing these issues at both national and regional levels. It was noted that the regional approach will enhance mutual accountability to stimulate implementation at the different levels with the support of AU-IBAR through the Live2Africa Programme and other partners.

According to Dr. Mabela, the major animal TADs in the regions

that require urgent interventions are the African Swine Fever, New Castle Disease, and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). AU-IBAR is working on various project interventions to reduce the threats caused TADs and the workshop offered a key platform for delegates to learn about the importance of updating and sharing information on the situation and the circulating serotypes in their countries.

The workshop noted the necessity of veterinary professionals to influence change in the policy environments they work in calls for veterinary services to set high visions, consonant with the great unexploited potential of the livestock sector and the manpower resources of Africa



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