



The African Union – Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

60 Years of fighting Rinderpest and Coordinating the Development of Animal Resources in Africa



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The African Union – Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) celebrated its 60 years of existence, the eradication of Rinderpest in Africa and the protection and development of animal resources on the continent on January 16th. The one-day ceremony, which was attended by dignitaries from African Union Member States and international partners, including Kenya's Minister for Livestock Development Mohamed Kutu, was a marker to showcase the important milestones that AU-IBAR has achieved in the last six decades on the continent since its inception in 1951.

Dubbed "From Rinderpest Eradication to Providing Leadership in the Development of Animal Resources for Africa", the anniversary was also a platform to chart a way forward for the organization in terms of evaluating the Strategic Plan 2010-2014 and recommendations on future programmes and projects and action. The theme reflected the fact that even though the organization started with the mandate to fight Rinderpest in Africa, presently, it now coordinates the

development and utilization of animal resources for human well-being and economic development of AU Member States.

AU-IBAR's now covers all aspects of animal resources including livestock, fisheries and wildlife, something that came out strongly in statements presented by AU Member States' representatives and all other invited dignitaries who were called upon to give statements. The ceremony also marked the unveiling of the commemorative



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AU-IBAR Staff and the Commissioner for Rural Economy for Agriculture H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime (Centre seated). To her right is AU-IBAR Director Prof. Ahmed El-Sawalhy

statue and an exhibition of publications that contain the tales of AU-IBAR's success stories.

Established in 1951 as the Inter African Bureau of Epizootic Diseases (IBED), AU-IBAR was ultimately affiliated to the Department of Rural Economy

for Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2003. With its headquarters in Nairobi, the organization envisions an Africa in which animal resources contribute significantly to the reduction of poverty and hunger on the continent. Working

closely with partners and through its Regional Coordinating Desks, AU-IBAR has managed to support and empower African Union Member States to utilize animal resources and make a significant contribution to the development of the African arena.

Currently, the organization's programmes include spearheading and providing information on Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (TADs) and Zoonosis, natural resource management, investment and competitiveness, standards and regulations, knowledge management, as well as policy and capacity building. With these programmes, AU-IBAR has managed to enrich communities and contribute to the continent's overall economic growth.

Its focus areas include, inter alia, animal and human influenza, pastoralism, rinderpest and trypanosomiasis. The leaders present lauded the AU-IBAR's efforts and pledged continued support in a bid to grow the sector and the continent as a whole.

Message from the Minister for Livestock Development

Kenya is greatly honoured to play a key role in the growth of this Pan African organization. This follows the central role played by Kenya, the country where AU-IBAR was born following a conference held in Nairobi in 1948 to harmonize Rinderpest control activities in Africa, following the loss of more than 90% of affected susceptible cattle and wildlife species in Africa due to the scourge. Nairobi was selected to host the organization over other candidate countries due to Kenya's well-developed agricultural sector.

The Kenyan government has always borne the cost of hosting AU-IBAR in line with the AU policy that any African country hosting an AU office must provide office space. Kenya has seen AU-IBAR's evolution from its initial mandate of fighting Rinderpest on the continent to its expanded scope of covering all animal health issues and resources towards overall economic development of the continent. To date, AU-IBAR remains the only African institution with the continent-wide mandate to mobilize the full productive potential of livestock, fisheries and wildlife as resources for human well-being and economic development.

As a host country, the benefits have been mutual. Kenya has availed substantial support to the organization's operations. On the other hand, AU-IBAR has continued to offer valuable national and regional technical support in animal health. The Kenya Veterinary Services and livestock producers in the country continue to benefit from the expertise drawn from all over Africa in the field of animal disease control, courtesy of AU-IBAR.

AU-IBAR played a central role in resource mobilization and technical coordination for Rinderpest eradication efforts that saw Kenya Certified as free from Rinderpest in 2009. AU-IBAR contributed vaccines and supported disease search and surveillance efforts in both domestic animals and wildlife with other partners. Additionally, AU-IBAR commissioned studies on the entire Rinderpest eradication process on the continent so as to draw lessons



Dr. Mohamed Abdi Kutu

learnt to inform control efforts to other diseases hindering development.

Currently, AU-IBAR is coordinating Africa-wide projects and programmes towards the eradication of swine flu, the development of a virtual platform for Animal Resource Information Systems (ARIS), improvement of vaccination coverage and the development of vaccine production capacities for neglected diseases under the Vaccines for Neglected Animal Diseases in Africa (VACNADA) project. As it stands, AU-IBAR's efforts are driving positive economic change not only to Kenya but to the entire African continent.

It should also be noted that the livestock sector in Kenya contributes to 12% of the national GDP, 40% of total agricultural earnings and employs 50% of the agricultural labour force. It is also the main source of livelihood for a majority of the rural population.

AU-IBAR at 60 years compares well with other international organizations like the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) at 88, the World Health Organization (WHO) at 64 and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations at 67 years. We are therefore justifiably proud of this institution positioned among other international institutions that are coming of age.

Message from the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture (REA)

AU-IBAR's 60th anniversary is a commemoration of the eradication of Rinderpest from Africa, which is an important milestone in the history of the continent. Rinderpest invaded Africa in the mid-19th century through Egypt and progressively spread to East Africa, then to West Africa and to Southern Africa towards the end of the century. The burgeoning number of infected cattle intensified efforts by national governments in collaboration with international organizations to fight the scourge. The losses were unimaginable that brought untold misery to the people of Africa. It is estimated that the outbreak cost West Africa about \$2 billion in the early 1980s.

It is during this period that a conference was held on Rinderpest that saw the establishment of the current AU-IBAR that has contributed tremendously to setting the continent free from Rinderpest and the growth of the animal health sector.

It should be noted that Rinderpest was the first infectious animal disease and only the second infectious disease after smallpox to be eradicated from the world. Therefore, eradicating the disease from the continent is an important milestone for AU-IBAR, though combined efforts and cooperation of AU Member States and partners involved.

Since its inception, AU-IBAR has undergone several institutional transformations from an organization focused on fighting one disease to a wider scope of the whole animal health sector and now to an organization dedicated to all aspects of animal resources development in the continent. The institution has undertaken a range of activities within its scope and mandate for the benefit of AU Member States with its leadership and commitment in the development of the continent.

Notably, AU-IBAR interventions have enhanced Member States' capacities for early detection and rapid response to disease outbreaks. It has also facilitated the Member States' capacities to build consensus on issues related to standards and regulations. Further, AU-IBAR's interventions



H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime

Therefore, as we mark AU-IBAR's 60 years of these efforts, my appeal is to ask all stakeholders for enhanced collaboration in financial and technical support.

have led to an improvement in the livelihoods of pastoral communities through enhanced access to natural resources mainly pasture and water, as well as sustainable management of fisheries resources and the facilitation of investment in the animal resource sector.

Going forwards, we cannot ignore the fact that the animal resource sector in Africa has challenges ranging from animal diseases, poor management practices, climate change and non-facilitatory policies. Nevertheless, AU-IBAR has in the recent past been involved in addressing these challenges, and cannot address them fully without the support of Member States, partners and all stakeholders.

Therefore, as we mark AU-IBAR's 60 years of these efforts, my appeal is to ask all stakeholders for enhanced collaboration in financial and technical support. This will also help the institution in implementing its 2010-2014 Strategic Plan that is aligned to AUC's Strategic Plan particularly on the pillars on peace and security, development and regional integration.



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60 Years of fighting Rinderpest and Coordinating the Development of Animal Resources in Africa

Message from AU-IBAR Director

As AU-IBAR celebrates its 60th anniversary themed "From Rinderpest Eradication to Providing Leadership in the Development of Animal Resources for Africa," we are reminded of the impressive evolution that the organization has undergone since its inception. It was to principally spearhead the fight against Rinderpest in Africa, but now encompasses the mandate



Prof. Ahmed El-Sawalhy

of AU Member States and other institutions that have made the global Rinderpest eradication a reality. AU-IBAR's role in marshaling the political goodwill, sustained financial support and technical partnerships in support of the venture is a success story worth emulation in other disease control and eradication efforts. It also warrants recording and preservation for future generations.

to coordinate the development and utilization of animal resources to for human wellbeing and economic development of AU Member States.

As it is, Africa as a continent is largely dependent on agriculture that includes animal resources like livestock, fisheries and wildlife. Sustainable development of these resources is crucial if the continent is to achieve accelerated economic and social growth. AU-IBAR was established six decades ago after a recommendation of the African Rinderpest Conference held in Nairobi in 1948, to assess the Rinderpest situation on the continent. But after a series of evaluations over the years, AU-IBAR now covers all aspects of animal health, resources and development that include animal production and trade and marketing.

This anniversary marks a Rinderpest-free continent which has been enabled by our partners and the leadership and commitment

of AU Member States and other institutions that have made the global Rinderpest eradication a reality. AU-IBAR's role in marshaling the political goodwill, sustained financial support and technical partnerships in support of the venture is a success story worth emulation in other disease control and eradication efforts. It also warrants recording and preservation for future generations. Additionally, AU-IBAR has over the years provided leadership for the development of animal resources on the continent including livestock, fisheries and wildlife. The presence of stakeholders during the celebration is a testimony to this recognition of these leadership roles. Our strides are geared towards becoming an efficient and value-adding institution that contributes to the African integration and development process in collaboration with AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and African citizens, which is in tandem with the AU's vision of "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena."

We also pride in the fact that some of our activities informed the establishment of other specialized technical offices of the AU

Commission such as the Pan African Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC), a vaccine quality control centre headquartered in Ethiopia. This is an office that AU-IBAR aids in the implementation of its programmes.

The last six decades have also seen us provide coordination for trypanosomiasis activities in Africa and AU-IBAR now hosts the International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis Research and Control (ISCTRC), a platform that promotes international cooperation in the fight against trypanosomiasis. The Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (AU-PATTEC) on the other hand, is a product of the ISCTRC's 'Mombasa Declaration' that spearheads the fight against tsetse and trypanosomiasis, which is also a product of AU-IBAR.

So as we mark this day, we are also celebrating important milestones that this organization has achieved in positioning after as an economic force, through the development of animal resources. All this could not be achieved without the individual and institutional support of all stakeholders and partners. It could not be accomplished without the support of the Kenya government through the Ministry of Livestock Development, the AU Member States, the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Secretariat, the Regional Economic Communities, our technical partners, the European Union, the AUC and all others for their support and commitment to our vision. I would also like to laud the efforts of my dedicated AU-IBAR team that have been an important pillar to the growth of the organization.



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upon the occasion of their
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