

**REPORT OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS**

**Paris, 22 May 2017**

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The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas met on 22 May 2017 at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 93 participants, including Delegates and observers from 21 Members of the Commission and representatives from 10 International or Regional Organisations:

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Rep., Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, and Uruguay.

International/Regional Organisations: ALA<sup>39</sup>, CARICOM<sup>40</sup>, CVP<sup>41</sup>, FAO, GFSI<sup>42</sup>, IEC<sup>43</sup>, IICA<sup>44</sup>, OIRSA<sup>45</sup>, PAHO-PANAFTOSA<sup>46</sup>, and WTO.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques, Delegate of Brazil and President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, seconded by Dr Luis Osvaldo Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas.

**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

At the proposal of Delegates, two items were added: one concerning the proposed 20% increase in annual contributions as from 2018 and the other on the procedure for selecting and nominating experts for the election of OIE Specialist Commissions.

The Agenda was adopted unanimously as described in the Appendix.

**2. Proposed increase in annual contributions for 2018**

Dr Alain Dehove, OIE Director of Finance, explained the basis of the proposal to increase the amount of annual contributions by 20% as from 2018, which had been submitted for adoption at the current General Session. He detailed the management improvements made by the OIE and the Organisation's operational constraints that could be resolved through increased contributions.

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<sup>39</sup> ALA: American Poultry Association

<sup>40</sup> CARICOM: Caribbean Community

<sup>41</sup> CVP: Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone

<sup>42</sup> GFSI: Global Food Safety Initiative

<sup>43</sup> IEC: International Egg Commission

<sup>44</sup> IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

<sup>45</sup> OIRSA: Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria

<sup>46</sup> PAHO: Pan American Health Organization - PANAFTOSA: Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center

This proposal includes improvements in the operation of both OIE Headquarters and Regional Representations, as well as in *ad hoc* group meetings and the implementation of the many actions that the OIE has included in its Sixth Strategic Plan.

### **3. Procedure for selecting and nominating experts for the election of OIE Specialist Commissions**

Ms Ann Backhouse, Head of the OIE Standards Department, responded to the concerns raised by Delegates regarding the proposed procedure for adoption. She explained that it was planned to keep the details of any experts who were not selected and that regional balance in the selection of nominated experts would be ensured. Finally she described the schedule of actions for compliance with this procedure.

### **4. OIE Regional Roadmap implementation - challenges faced by the region**

Dr Luis O. Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, presented the activities for the Regional Roadmap of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020) and provided details on the actions of the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations for the three strategic objectives and three cross-cutting areas of the Plan.

With regard to Strategic Objective 1 “Securing animal health and welfare by appropriate risk management”, Dr Barcos described the actions carried out by the regional and sub-regional offices in support of the OIE mandate, in particular the latest online meeting held in December 2016 to discuss standards under review in which 20 countries had participated, thanks to the development of a tutorial for the WebEx platform. He said that the objective had been for Delegates to reach agreement on the chapters under review. Dr Barcos highlighted the support provided by Canada and a group of Delegates that had worked to compile the proposed comments.

With respect to official recognition of countries’ animal disease status, the Regional Representative mentioned the support provided to the Status Department to ensure the timely submission of annual reconfirmations and the support provided to Member Countries.

Referring to the coordination of disease control and eradication, he described actions to support control plans for foot and mouth disease and classical swine fever and to support the GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee for the Americas, highlighting the revision of the list of priority diseases.

On the subject of antimicrobial resistance, he welcomed the increase in the number of replies to the questionnaire on antimicrobial use, as compared with the previous year, acknowledging that this had been due to both country efforts and follow-up work by the regional and sub-regional offices, including online meetings and customised tutorials. He recommended that Veterinary Services make resources available to facilitate responding to questionnaires, as this would be an annual task. He also pointed out that the OIE Strategy required countries to develop their National Plans in line with the OIE Strategy and in a “One Health” spirit. Lastly, he stressed the importance of private-sector participation in this process through the Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET), for example.

In connection with animal welfare, Dr Barcos confirmed the continued applicability of the Regional Strategy and highlighted the work initiated jointly with the Collaborating Centre and OIE Headquarters to develop the Action Plan.

With regard to Strategic Objective 2, “Establishing trust through transparency and communication”, Dr Barcos described the mandate for continuously improving the transparency of disease reporting and requested Delegates to continue to play an active part on this important activity. He noted that transparency also included publicising the results of OIE PVS Pathway missions.

On the subject of communication, he commented on the duties of the recently created post of Regional Communication Correspondent and on the redesign of the regional website, which would be launched at a later date. He also commented on the development and dissemination of communication materials and on the need to broaden their reach to all stakeholders.

With regard to Strategic Objective 3, “Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Veterinary Services”, the Regional Representative referred to the OIE mandate for strengthening Veterinary Services through the PVS Pathway. He stressed the need for Member Countries to make progress in all stages of the PVS Pathway, including through PVS Evaluation Follow-up missions, and to consider formally integrating the OIE PVS Pathway into national strategic planning.

Dr Barcos mentioned support for the OIE Twinning Programme, inviting Delegates to take advantage of this tool. He also detailed the need to extend OIE actions to Veterinary Education Establishments and Veterinary Statutory Bodies.

Dr Barcos made the following comments on the cross-cutting areas.

With regard to Cross-cutting Area A, “Scientific excellence”, he said that coordinated actions within the Tripartite Agreement between the OIE, FAO and World Health Organization (WHO) needed to be promoted in countries.

With regard to Cross-cutting Area B, “Diversity, inclusiveness, engagement, transparency”, he highlighted the commitment to promote the participation of all Member Countries in the region in the Specialist Commissions, Regional Commission and OIE Council.

With regard to Cross-cutting Area C, “Governance”, he provided details on actions to support the Regional Commission, including the preparation of the Conferences of the OIE Regional Commission.

On the subject of partnerships, he provided details on links with other organisations, highlighting the future joint meeting with the World Customs Organization and GF-TADs activities, and mentioned relations with other OIE Regional Commissions. He also referred to on-going linkages with Veterinary Education Establishments and Veterinary Statutory Bodies. Finally, he pointed to partnerships with the different private sector’s actors.

Dr Barcos concluded by stressing the importance of paying annual contributions to the OIE to enable it to carry out its activities. He also discussed the opportunity to send Veterinary Service staff to work in Regional and Sub-Regional Representations.

## **5. Report on OIE Council meetings**

Dr Joaquín Braulio Delgadillo Álvarez, Member of the OIE Council and Delegate of Mexico, began his presentation by informing the Delegates that the OIE Council had met three times since the last General Session. The meetings were held in September 2016 and in February and May 2017, and addressed issues of strategic importance to the OIE, including administrative matters, some of which will be presented at the 85th General Session. He reminded Delegates that the summary of the Council minutes were available on the Delegates website.

Dr Delgadillo Álvarez summarised the most important issues discussed by the Council at the above meetings, some of which were as follows:

- A detailed assessment was made of the 84th OIE General Session with a view to making improvements to the 85th General Session;
- The Council suggested applying an increase of 20% to Member Countries' annual contributions to the OIE, to be submitted for approval at the 85th General Session;
- As the next elections of experts for the Specialist Commissions will be held in 2018, the procedure for their nomination by Member Countries was discussed;
- An evaluation was made of the proposals to be submitted for approval by the World Assembly of Delegates regarding new Collaborating Centres and cooperation agreements to be signed;
- The Council expressed the wish to provide the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations with long-term financial stability. It also mentioned the need to analyse the choice and number of regional and sub-regional offices, using well-defined criteria;
- It was explained that two new Members of the Council would be elected at the current General Session: one for the Africa Region and the other for the Asia, Far East and Oceania Region.

With regard to preparing the 85th General Session, Dr Delgadillo Álvarez said that the Council had considered the Director General's proposals for preparing the General Session and had reviewed the nominations for awards in the Gold and Merit categories. The Council also approved the annual report on OIE activities in 2016 presented by the Director General, prior to its adoption by the Assembly.

To conclude, Dr Hugo Federico Idoyaga Benítez, Member of the OIE Council and Delegate of Paraguay stressed the importance of the online meetings held with Delegates of Member Countries in the Americas prior to and after each Council meeting. These online meetings, in which there was a high attendance rate from the region, keep countries informed about Council activities and discussions. He also encouraged those present to continue to take part in such meetings. He cited as an example proposals received at online meetings that had been submitted to the Council.

Lastly, Dr Idoyaga Benítez took the opportunity to say once again that the Members of both the Council and the Bureau represented all Member Countries in the Americas region and would be happy to answer any queries or provide any support they might require.

**6. Report on the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, including the outcomes of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 14 to 18 November 2016**

Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques, President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Brazil, began his presentation by describing the composition of the Bureau, elected in May 2015 at the General Session, which currently had two positions vacant (Vice-President and Secretary General) to be filled at the current General Session.

Dr Figueiredo Marques detailed actions to encourage the active participation of Member Countries in the region in the comment-submission process for OIE standards under review. He pointed to the face-to-face meeting held in November 2016, prior to the Regional Conference, to discuss and reach consensus on the standards under review, as well as the online meeting of December 2016, pointing to the high attendance rate and the need to make further progress in this area.

Referring to the outcomes of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, Dr Figueiredo Marques explained that the main aim of the recommendation for Member Countries arising from Technical Item I (with questionnaire), entitled “*Implementation and maintenance of animal traceability in the Americas: overview of current status and impact for international trade*”, was for Member Countries in the Americas to extend the application of OIE standards on animal traceability, using them as a basis for developing or improving their own systems and applying them to import and export systems. The resulting application of traceability standards in national legislation will support disease control and surveillance activities.

The recommendation for the OIE was that it continue to promote the use of its traceability standards in line with the OIE PVS Pathway, as a means for improving Veterinary Services, including identification and traceability.

With regard to Technical Item II (without questionnaire), entitled “*Highly pathogenic avian influenza: challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread*”, Member Countries were recommended to: conduct active surveillance in wild birds in order to track and monitor the avian influenza virus in this population; develop contingency plans that include the activities required to control this disease; and promote the implementation of biosecurity measures that are in line with the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

With regard to the additional technical item entitled “*Depopulation and/or movement of animal populations during animal health emergencies and natural disasters: experience in the region*”, it was agreed that resilience to natural disasters and animal health contingencies was achieved by integrating Veterinary Services’ disaster reduction and management plans into national platforms.

It was also recommended that the OIE organise joint seminars for National Focal Points for wildlife, animal disease notification and laboratories in order to foster nationwide synergies in the notification of diseases affecting wildlife, as is the case with avian influenza.

Finally, Dr Figueiredo Marques reported that, as in previous years, on Sunday 21 May a meeting of Delegates of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas had been held to discuss standards under review and to adopt common positions for the region.

Dr Figueiredo Marques described participation in meetings of the GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee for the Americas and in the CAMEVET seminar, highlighting CAMEVET support for the OIE’s work on antimicrobial resistance.

The President of the Regional Commission concluded by thanking the staff of the OIE Regional Representation for the Americas and the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Central America for its work in support of all Member Countries in the region.

## **7. Confirmation of the venue of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to be held in November 2018**

Dr Nimia Lissette Gómez Rodríguez, OIE Delegate of Dominican Republic, reiterated her country’s offer to host the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas. The Conference will be held tentatively in Punta Cana (Dominican Republic) in November 2018.

**8. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 87th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2019**

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (with a questionnaire to Members) for inclusion in the agenda of the 87th General Session:

- Implementation of zoning and compartmentalisation in disease control and the maintenance of safe trade

**9. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas**

The Regional Commission proposed the following technical item (with a questionnaire to Members) for inclusion in the agenda of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas:

- Role of private veterinarians in official Veterinary Service programmes: mechanisms for interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalised world

**10. Proposal of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to join the Bureau of the Regional Commission for the Americas as Vice-President and Secretary General**

Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques first reminded participants that the Delegates of Guatemala and Canada had stepped down, leaving vacant their respective positions as Vice-President and Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, which required an election to be held.

Following a discussion involving several Delegates, the following persons were unanimously proposed, for a one-year period, until the election for the next three-year mandate of the Bureau of the OIE Regional, which will be held in May 2018:

**Vice-President:** Dr Bernardo Jaén Hernández, Delegate of Costa Rica;

**Secretary General:** Dr Harpreet Kochhar, Delegate of Canada.

This proposal will be presented to the World Assembly for endorsement.

**11. Request of Curacao to become an OIE Member Country**

Dr Guilherme H. Figueiredo Marques informed participants of an application by the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the accession of Curacao as an OIE Member Country, which had been approved by the Council and would be submitted to the World Assembly of Delegates for approval. He added that this was in line with the objective of increasing the number of Caribbean Members of the OIE.

**12. Preliminary outcomes of the PVS Pathway Think Tank Forum**

Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, described the OIE PVS Pathway Think Tank Forum, which had been held at OIE Headquarters in Paris from 4 to 6 April 2017. He confirmed that it had clearly met its stated purpose of providing an “opportunity to work together to review and plan for the strategic evolution of the OIE PVS Pathway in improving animal health and welfare globally”, with its three days of highly successful, interactive, stimulating and productive discussion.

He explained that the 74 participants had been divided into four roughly equal-sized stakeholder groups representing: (i) Member Countries; (ii) OIE staff; (iii) PVS Pathway experts and (iv) OIE partners (including donors). Each group had focused on four or five

concepts or options of greatest relevance to the group for evolving the PVS Pathway. Dr Caya gave a brief summary of the concepts that had been considered and commended the excellent feedback received from all participants on the detailed preparations, the interactive and innovative format and delivery, and the positive, open and convivial atmosphere throughout.

Dr Caya said that the report was being finalised and that outcomes would be shared with all Member Countries and interested parties, with the evolution of the OIE PVS Pathway to be rolled out intensively over the next 12 months. He added that, while the specifics would be confirmed over the coming weeks, the overall aim would be to provide OIE Member Countries, staff, experts and partners with a more tailored, flexible approach to their PVS Pathway engagement that was more responsive to their particular needs.

In conclusion, he said that such an evolution was completely appropriate, given the long standing of the PVS Pathway and its stable and robust basic tools and methods. As the great majority of countries already possess a solid baseline of PVS Pathway evaluation and planning information, more highly tailored approaches will further assist them in moving forward with the OIE to improve animal health globally.

### **13. Status of notifications by Members in the Americas**

Dr Paula Cáceres Soto, Head of the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, gave a brief update on the status of notifications by Members in the region as of 18 May 2017.

She began by providing detailed regional indicators on compliance with reporting in 2016. Based on an analysis of the indicators for reports received for 2016, Dr Cáceres Soto confirmed the great commitment Members had shown to disease reporting and to compliance with notification requirements.

Dr Cáceres Soto also gave an overview of some of the elements of tracking events not notified to the OIE and encouraged Members to provide feedback to clarify the situation when requests had been made.

To conclude, Dr Cáceres Soto asked for support from the region to recommend one animal disease notification focal point from the region to join the Technical Advisory Committee, which is one of the governance bodies of the WAHIS+ renovation project.

### **14. OIE relevant standards to be adopted during the General Session – Regional approach**

It was explained that a number of meetings had been held ahead of the 85th General Session: an online meeting in December 2016 and two face-to-face meetings, in November 2016 and May 2017.

The Delegates of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas reviewed the various items proposed for adoption at the 85th General Session. This involved the selection of items relevant to the region, including the: criteria for assessing the safety of commodities; chapters on porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome; African swine fever and classical swine fever with regard to the definition of pig categories; support for furthering the work on glanders; welfare of working equids; prevention and control of Salmonella in commercial pig production systems; and updating of criteria for the official recognition of disease status for bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

### **15. Presentations from international and regional organisations**

#### ***Caribbean Community (CARICOM)***

Dr Gavin Peters, Animal Health Specialist at the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), presented CARICOM and the objectives and missions of CAHFSA and its relationship with the OIE. He went on to list and detail the animal health

activities on which CAHFSA was currently working. He concluded by referring to the accession of Caribbean Islands to the OIE.

***Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP)***

Dr Jorge Berrios, representing the CVP, began by presenting the current status of OIE PVS Pathway missions in Member Countries of the Americas. He then detailed the missions conducted in CVP member countries and presented a comparative analysis of the result relating to the chapter on access to markets. Dr Suárez Hurtado concluded by encouraging those present to request PVS Evaluation Follow-up missions to the OIE.

***International Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA)***

Dr Efraín Medina Guerra, OIRSA Executive Director, listed the actions undertaken by OIRSA in 2016: a laboratory test accreditation project conducted jointly with the OIE; support for screwworm and foot and mouth disease surveillance; control and eradication of classical swine fever in Guatemala; and sampling for avian influenza. To conclude, he announced that a workshop for OIRSA member countries on legislation and biological threat reduction would be held jointly with the OIE in Panama in June 2017.

***Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center of the World Health Organization's Pan American Health Organization (PANAFTOSA PAHO/WHO)***

Dr Ottorino Cosivi, Director of PANAFTOSA PAHO/WHO, described the outcomes of the 44th meeting of the South American Committee for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease (COSALFA) and the Pre-COSALFA Seminar. This included the final stages of the Hemispheric Plan for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (PHEFA) and the risk analysis for serotypes A, O and C. He also described the establishment of a regional antigen and vaccine bank and the biosecurity guidelines in accordance with the current stage of eradication. He concluded by highlighting collaboration with other organisations.

The meeting officially ended at 6:40 p.m.

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**Agenda**

1. Adoption of the Agenda;
2. Proposed increase in annual contributions for 2018;
3. Procedure for selecting and nominating experts for the election of OIE Specialist Commissions;
4. OIE Regional Roadmap implementation - challenges faced by the region;
5. Report on OIE Council meetings;
6. Report on the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, including the outcomes of the 23rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 14 to 18 November 2016;
7. Confirmation of the venue of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to be held in November 2018;
8. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the 87th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates to be held in May 2019;
9. Selection of Technical Item I (with questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas;
10. Proposal of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to join the Bureau of the Regional Commission for the Americas as Vice-President and Secretary General;
11. Request of Curacao to become an OIE Member Country;
12. Preliminary outcomes of the PVS Pathway Think Tank Forum;
13. Status of notifications by Members in the Americas;
14. OIE relevant standards to be adopted during the General Session – Regional approach;
15. Presentations from international and regional organisations:
  - *Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center of the World Health Organization's Pan American Health Organization (PANAFTOSA PAHO/WHO);*
  - *International Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA);*
  - *Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP);*
  - *Caribbean Community (CARICOM)*

