



**WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH**  
*Protecting animals, preserving our future*

Virtual Sessions of the 25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, an example of resilience and adaptation to the global health crisis.

On 22 and 23 September 2020, the **25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas** took place for the first time in a virtual format. This was agreed after the OIE Council decided to adapt the Conference, following an extraordinary meeting in June, in consideration of the lessons learned and future proposals on the functioning of the OIE in crisis situations.



Considering the persistence of the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of the Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Barbados, Dr. Mark Trotman, mentioned that this format was not new to them because for the last 15 years, the Board of the Regional Commission has been holding extraordinary virtual meetings twice a year. However, it did represent a challenge for the Regional Commission, as it was the first time that the Member Countries met virtually to: establish proposals for the last General Session, discuss the selection of the candidates for the specialised commissions, as well as the recognition of the Official Statuses of the Countries. With regard to the adaptation of OIE activities during the pandemic by COVID-19, the need arose from these discussions to analyse the possibility of changes to OIE rules to allow certain decisions to be taken by electronic means, such as the election of the Director General, the Specialist Commissions and the Boards, the official recognition of sanitary status and certain aspects of field missions.

*“International cooperation plays a key role in ensuring animal health and welfare as well as animal production food safety, especially during these times marked by new challenges at national, regional, and global level. The purpose of this Conference is to examine all these issues at regional level and to discuss with key experts and relevant OIE teams”.*  
**Dra. Monique Eloït, OIE Director General**

During the first day of the 25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, the actions of FAO, WHO and OIE in the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic with



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the potential for a lasting and sustainable partnership under the "One Health" concept and its impact on Member Countries were presented. The second day was dedicated to the Presentation of Regional Projects on Classical Swine Fever and Avian Influenza, under the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs); Antimicrobial Resistance and its Impact on Trade and the OIE Strategy for Aquatic Animal Health; concluding with a summary of the sanitary situation in the Region and the progress in the implementation of the new OIE-WAHIS system.

In order for OIE Members to implement better wildlife health management practices for sustainable trade and use and to improve the capacity for prevention, early detection, mitigation and reporting of pathogen spill-over events in these animal populations, the **OIE Strategy for Reducing the Risk and Future Events of Dissemination of Diseases (Wild-life Health Management)** was presented, continuing with the preparation for threats and vision for the future given the current context in which the 60.3% of emerging infectious diseases have an animal origin, and that most of these (71.8%) come from wildlife due to an increasing interaction at the human-animal-ecosystem interface, considering that wildlife is essential to maintain functioning ecosystems.

To ensure that the needs of the Member Countries of the Americas are included in the continuity of projects during the pandemic, the experiences of Cuba, El Salvador, Peru, the United States of America and Uruguay on how the Veterinary Services are managing the COVID-19 crisis were included in the virtual Conference. Priority topics for countries included surveillance, international trade certification, and developments in trade in animal products during the pandemic.

In order to examine all these factors at the regional level and to discuss them with the relevant OIE experts and teams, the thirty-two Members of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, as well as regional and international organisations working in the field of animal and veterinary public health, as observers, were invited to participate in the 25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas. Because protecting animals is preserving our future.

For more information visit the Conference [website](#)

Access the Americas Region [website](#)