

# Report of the Meeting of the Regional Commission for the Americas

## Session 1 (virtual)

The Regional Commission for the Americas met by videoconference on 15 May 2024, at 4:00 p.m. CEST. The meeting was attended by 77 participants, including Delegates and observers from 27 Members of the Commission and representatives from 7 International and Regional Organisations:

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, Chile, Dominican Rep., Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United States of America and Uruguay.

International/Regional Organisations: Caribbean Agriculture Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), Association of Latin American and Caribbean Feed Industry (Feedlatina), Ibero-American Pork Organization (OIPORC), Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health (PANAFTOSA/VPH-PAHO/WHO), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and General Secretariat of the Andean Community (SG-CAN).

The meeting was chaired by Dr Ximena Melón, President of the Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Argentine, accompanied by Dr Luis Osvaldo Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas.

### 1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

A proposal was made to modify the Agenda to include a discussion of the regional positions for the WOAHA General Session, as the last topic of the open session. The Agenda, described in the Annex, was unanimously adopted with the proposed modifications.

### 2. **Analysis and evaluation of the institutional, technical and financial governance of the World Organisation of Animal Health**

Dr François Caya, WOAHA Chief of Staff, introduced Mr Eelco Szabo, a legal and governance consultant and part of a consortium mandated by WOAHA to undertake what is commonly referred to as the external review of the WOAHA Basic Texts.

Mr Szabo, who has extensive experience in legal and governance frameworks across various international organisations, presented the in-depth analysis and review of the governance structures and processes of the Organisation reflected in the General Session working document 91GS/Adm-13 titled 'Analysis and evaluation of the institutional, technical and financial governance of WOAHA'. This external review, conducted over nine months, meticulously examined the foundational treaty, Basic Texts, numerous resolutions, and conducted interviews and workshops with members of WOAHA's governance bodies and relevant officials, including the Council. This comprehensive approach helped to understand the historical and current operational frameworks and identify areas for potential improvement in institutional, technical and financial governance.

Mr Szabo went on to provide an overview of the various focus areas detailed in the report, and provided some relevant and concrete examples. Each focus area was analysed to recommend improvements that could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of WOAAH's governance structures. For instance, institutional governance discussed could include revisiting the roles and responsibilities of WOAAH's governing bodies to ensure clarity and eliminate overlaps, while technical governance might focus on formalising procedures for standard-setting to ensure transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, the presentation emphasised the next steps in the governance review process, indicating the opportunity to be given to the Assembly during the upcoming General Session to explore the sustainability of current WOAAH's governance in future scenarios to be explored during the Forum 'Is WOAAH Ready for the Future?' Finally, Mr Szabo highlighted the importance of aligning WOAAH's governance structures with its current and future needs, suggesting that revisions to the Basic Texts and other governance documents may be necessary to address the evolving challenges in global animal health governance. As suggested in draft Resolution No. 12 'Revision of the WOAAH Basic Texts', this would involve a collective effort from all Members to engage in meaningful discussions and make informed decisions on the proposed changes, aiming for a governance framework that is robust, transparent and capable of meeting the Organisation's objectives effectively.

Following a brief introduction of Resolution No. 12 titled 'Revision of the WOAAH Basic Texts' in which the creation of a dedicated group on governance is mentioned, Argentina suggested that the Regional Commissions be consulted on the identification of the group membership.

**3. Preparation of the 27th Conference of the Regional Commission to be held in Quito, Ecuador, from 11 to 15 November 2024**

Dr Christian Zambrano, representing Dr Wilson Patricio Almeida Granja, the Delegate of Ecuador, confirmed that his country was both ready and proud to host this important regional event and invited all the Delegates to take part in the Conference that will be held in Quito, Ecuador, from 11 to 15 November 2024.

He briefly touched on the various steps that his country had taken to start organising the conference. Dr Almeida Granja gave a general outline of the event and promised the attendees that all necessary details would be sent to them in time.

**4. Selection of the Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 27th Conference of the Regional Commission**

The Regional Commission selected the following technical item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 27th Conference of the Regional Commission for the Americas:

'New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) and  
its economic impact on the affected countries'

**5. Selection of strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by WOAAH through various means (Scientific and Technical Review, Newsletter, scientific paper, technical item or during a specific activity/meeting)**

The Regional Commission selected the following strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by the WOAAH through various means:

1. Current scenario of critical veterinary products

2. Bovine brucellosis, a growing zoonosis which requires a change of strategy
3. Designing and conducting surveillance to maximise effectiveness and efficiency of information gathering
4. Maintenance of surveillance/animal health testing or animal health status in active war zones and/or mass civil or political unrest

## 6. **One Health and Quadripartite activities in the region**

Dr Maria Eugenia Chimenti, Technical Assistant, WOAHA Regional Representation, informed those attending about the activities being rolled out in the region under the 'One Health' framework. She mentioned the Quadripartite monthly coordination meetings with the regional and subregional organisations, originally geared to discussing Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) curbing initiatives, that now focus on coordinating new areas of action including AMR, rabies and influenza and neglected zoonotic diseases, as well as wild animal health and environmental factors. She highlighted the need to reach a formal agreement in the region, along with guaranteeing governance and the availability of resources.

## 7. **Project for the harmonisation of health requirements (HHP) and implementation of a common protocol and health certificate based on the provisions of the WOAHA Terrestrial Code for temporary movements of HHP horses in South America**

Dr Mauro Meske, Project Officer, WOAHA's Status Department, touched on the efforts being made to facilitate the temporary movement of HHP horses under the agreement with the International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC). He pointed out that technical documents were being drawn up to harmonise the requirements in the Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market) Mercosur and Andean Community regional blocks, as well as Chile. He added that a simulation exercise had been conducted on the application of the documents developed. Lastly, he urged the Delegates to become involved in the harmonisation process and encourage the rollout of the documents in their countries.

## 8. **2025 Budgeted Work Programme – Income Estimates and Contribution Scale**

Mr Xavier Pairault, WOAHA Director of Administration, explained the rationale behind the proposal of increasing the statutory contributions rates by 6.9% for 2025.

Mr Pairault reminded the Regional Commission that: 1) discussions regarding the financial sustainability of WOAHA regular budget started during the Council meeting in September 2021, mainly considering the impact of the digitalisation as well as the growing number and types of activities supported by WOAHA in order to respond to its Member's needs; 2) an extraordinary Council meeting, held in December 2021, supported the proposal presented and finally accepted by the Assembly in 2022, increasing the statutory contributions of 30% over the period 2023–2025, with a 15% increase adopted for 2023 and a 7.5% foreseen increase for 2024 and 2025; 3) an explanatory note was shared with Delegates explaining the rationale behind the increase proposed in 2022; 4) the high inflation rate and deteriorated economic situation led to a request and a vote at the 2023 General Session for a 15% increase for 2024 instead of the originally anticipated 7.5%.

The Director of Administration then detailed the key factors taken into account to support the evolution of the statutory contributions, namely: 1) a robust financial management and performance in 2023, enabling WOAHA to absorb increased costs; 2) the confirmation of decreasing inflation rate for 2024 and 2025 with a temporary favourable impact; 3) the new financial policy framework and commitment tracking tool leading to better budgetary planning and financial oversight; 4) a 2025 work programme supported by 60 quantitative indicators with an improved transparency and hopefully efficiency as well; and 5) any request for increased contributions should also consider the 'Analysis and evaluation of the institutional, technical, and financial governance of WOAHA' – see 91GS/Adm-13.

Mr Pairault closed by informing that, based on the above factors, the 2025 contribution scale has been revised with a +6.9% increase – only applying the 2023 Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development Total Consumer Price Index (OECD – Total CPI) as per Resolution 15 of the 2018 General Session.

## 9. Discussion on regional positions for WOAH General Session

The Regional Commission discussed and agreed on a common position to be put forward at the 91st General Session on behalf of the Members of the Regional Commission for the Americas, on the following items:

A draft motion should be sent to the Director General and a speech made at the 91st General Session, advocating greater transparency in the candidate assessment and selection (acceptance or rejection) process for the Specialist Commissions.

A draft motion should be sent to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission (Code Commission) and a speech made at the 91st General Session to amend Article 7.5.28, to incorporate the use of hooks provided that they do not distress, frighten or hurt the animals as an alternative to using shackles on broilers. ([Chapter 7.5](#) of the Terrestrial Code on the Slaughter of Animals).

A draft motion should be sent to the Code Commission and a speech made at the 91st General Session, proposing a style change in the expression on the veterinarians use of antimicrobials and the limitation of their use in promoting growth and their prescription, to bring it into line with the International Codex Alimentarius, (Articles 6.10.1, 6.10.3 and 6.10.6 of the Terrestrial Code on the [Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine](#)).

Other speeches to be made during the General Session:

Support for the revisions to [Chapter 8.8](#) (Infection with foot and mouth disease virus), as presented for adoption.

Motion to revise the definition of poultry, with a risk-based approach that facilitates international trade, especially for the interpretation of the chapter on [Infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses](#). A request will be made to the group dealing with the subject to consider the region's experts.

Opposition to the listing of Infectious Spleen and Kidney Necrosis virus (ISKNV) in the Aquatic Animal Health Code ([Chapter 1.3](#)), based on its widespread distribution across the world and potential impact on ornamental fish trade through the application of more restrictive measures.

## 10. WOAH Regions' kiosk

Ms Nathaly Monsalve, WOAH Regional Activities Coordination Manager of the Regional Activities Department (RAD), provided information on the scheduled Regional kiosk during the General Session aimed at showcasing the key activities conducted by WOAH at regional level. She encouraged Delegates to visit the kiosk and interact with colleagues from the Regions.

**11. Elections of the Specialist Commissions**

On behalf of Dr Monserrat Arroyo, WOAHA Deputy Director General of International Standards and Science, Dr François Caya described the overall process for the election of WOAHA's Specialist Commissions, focusing on the selection process from the beginning, including the initial call for candidates, the evaluation process, the agreed list by the Council, and the final election process that will take place on Tuesday 28 May 2024 within the first administrative session of the General Session.

He highlighted the open call and evaluation of both, the new candidates for election to the Specialist Commissions, as well as the evaluation of the current Specialist Commissions member's performance through a standardised process based on the Performance Management Framework.

Dr Caya closed his intervention by reminding the Delegates of their roles during each step of the elections.

**12. Elections: voting modalities and quorum**

Mr Rodney De-Souza, Head of WOAHA Legal Affairs Unit, briefly presented the voting modalities and reminded the assembled of the required quorum and majorities for the elections.

**13. Proposal and selection of candidates for the election of the Bureau of the Regional Commission, the Council and the Specialist Commissions**

Dr Ximena Melón chaired the discussion regarding the proposal of candidates to be presented to the World Assembly for election on Tuesday 28 May.

The Delegates of the Region agreed on the following proposed names:

**Council:**

Dr Wilmer José Juárez Juárez (Delegate of Nicaragua)

Dr Hugo Idoyaga Benítez, current President of the World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Paraguay, will assume the position of the Past President of the Council.

**Bureau of the Regional Commission:**

President and first Vice-president: although agreement has been reached to propose Dr Rosemary Sifford (Delegate of the United States of America) and Dr Rafael Enrique Rodriguez Alvarado (Delegate of Honduras) for these positions, their individual posts have yet to be agreed.

Second Vice-president: Dr Carlos Orellana Vaquero (Chile)

Secretary-General: Dr Roxana Alvarez (Belize)

The unresolved definition of the proposals for setting up the Regional Commission Bureau will be discussed prior to the face-to-face session when the agreements reached will be formalised.

**Specialist Commissions:**

The region's Delegates did not debate the proposals for the Specialist Commission members. The various proposals will be discussed in advance of the face-to-face session when the agreements reached will be formalised.

**14. Closing**

The meeting officially ended at 9:30 p.m. CEST.

## Session 2 (face to face)

The Regional Commission for the Americas met face to face on 27 May 2024, at 8:30 a.m. CEST, at the Maison de la Chimie in Paris. The meeting was attended by 29 Members of the Commission:

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Chile, Dominican (Rep.), Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Uruguay.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Ximena Melón, President of the Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Argentina, accompanied by Dr Luis Barcos, Regional Representative for the Americas.

### 1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, described in the [annex](#), was unanimously adopted.

### 2. Confirmation of the main points agreed during the virtual meeting held on May 15th (including the proposed candidates and the technical topics)

The President of the Regional Commission summarised the main points discussed during the virtual meeting held on 15 May 2024, at 7:00 a.m. CEST, allowing the Regional Commission to confirm the main points agreed, namely the technical item proposed for the forthcoming Regional Conference, the strategic topics proposed to be addressed by WOAHP through various means, and the candidates proposed by the region to be presented to the World Assembly for the election of the Bureau of the Regional Commission, the Council and the Specialist Commissions.

The region's Delegates agreed the application of the following candidates to form the Bureau of the Regional Commission:

President: Dr Rosemary Sifford (United States of America)  
First Vice-president: Dr Rafael Rodríguez Alvarado (Honduras)  
Second Vice-president: Dr Carlos Orellana Vaquero (Chile)  
Secretary-General: Dr Roxana Alvarez (Belize)

#### Specialist Commissions:

The Regional Commission agreed on the following proposals for positions:

##### Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission

Dr Gastón Funes (Argentina) – Vice-president  
Dr Bernardo Todeschini (Brazil) – Member

##### Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission

Dr Alicia Gallardo Lagno (Chile) – President  
Dr Bernita Griffin (Canada) – Member

##### Biological Standards Commission

Dr Chris Oura (Trinidad and Tobago) – Vice-president  
Dr Aruna Ambagala (Canada) – Member

##### Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases

Dr Cristóbal Zepeda (United States of America) – President

3. **Proposal of WOAHA Collaborating Centre for Genome Monitoring of Swine Viral Disease hosted by the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), United States of America**

Dr Rosemary Sifford, Delegate of the United States of America, submitted a request to the Regional Commission in order for it to consider the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan (Kansas) as a WOAHA Collaborating Centre for Genome Monitoring of Swine Viral Disease.

She reported that all details had been sent to the Delegates in advance.

The Regional Commission unanimously approved the proposal.

4. **Discussion on regional positions for WOAHA General Session**

The common positions to be presented at the 91st General Session on behalf of the Members of the Regional Commission for the Americas, were revised and confirmed as agreed during the virtual session.

5. **WOAHA Incident Management System**

Dr Daniel Donachie, the Preparation and Resilience Department Programme Manager, outlined the ongoing work to develop the WOAHA Incident Management System, and emphasised that in 2024, WOAHA developed an Incident Management System to improve the organisation's technical response to incidents.

He explained that the Incident Management System encompasses policies, procedures and resources (including personnel) to effectively manage incidents, facilitating communication, control and decision-making during emergencies. This system will enable WOAHA to respond more efficiently to international and regional emergencies, thus offering its Members greater support within the organisation's scope and mandate.

Dr Donachie observed that the initiative follows the recommendations of the revision following the COVID-19 crisis response and was mandated by the Membership under the Emergency Management Technical Item Resolution (General Session, 2022). Ausvet Ltd has been contracted as the Incident Management System development service provider. Dr Matthew Stone, of Spade Solutions Ltd, was also contracted to serve as an independent expert consultant to support WOAHA in reviewing the Incident Management System deliverables. The development will proceed in phases: starting with scoping and design, followed by the development and training, then concluding with testing through a simulation exercise and refinement.

He concluded by informing the Delegates that the Incident Management System is due to be finalised in May 2025, when the Members will be informed during the General Session, 2025.

6. **Closing**

The session officially ended at 10:10 a.m. CEST

**MEETING OF THE  
REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS**  
**Session 1 (virtual)**  
**15 May 2024**  
**(4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Paris time)**

---

**Agenda**

- 3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Zoom check-in and connecting.
- 4:00 p.m. – 4:05 p.m. Adoption of the agenda (Dr Ximena Melón, President of the Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Argentina)
- 4:05 p.m.– 4:35 p.m. Analysis and evaluation of WOAHA's institutional, technical and financial governance (Dr François Caya, WOAHA Chief of staff and Mr Eelco Szabo, external consultant)
- 4:35 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Preparation of the 27th Conference of the Regional Commission to be held in Quito, Ecuador, from 11 to 15 November 2024 (Dr Christian Zambrano, Alternate Delegate of Ecuador)
- 4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Selection of the Technical Item II (without questionnaire) to be included in the agenda of the 27th Conference of the Regional Commission (Dr Rafael Enrique Rodriguez Alvarado, Delegate of Honduras)
- 5:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Selection of three strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by WOAHA through various means (Scientific and Technical Review, Newsletter, scientific paper, technical item or during a specific activity/meeting) (Dr Rosemary Sifford, Vice President of the Regional Commission and Delegate of the United States of America)
- 5:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. One Health and Quadripartite activities in the region (Dr Maria Eugenia Chimenti, Technical Assistant WOAHA Regional Representation)
- 5:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Project for the harmonisation of health requirements and implementation of a common protocol and health certificate based on the provisions of the WOAHA Terrestrial Code for temporary movements of HHP horses in South America (Dr Mauro Meske, WOAHA Disease Status officer)
- 5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.: 2025 Budgeted Work Programme – Income Estimates and Contribution Scale (Mr Xavier Pairault, WOAHA Director of Administration)
- 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Preliminary discussion on the regional position for WOAHA General Session (Dr Ximena Melón)

**CLOSED SESSION FOR DELEGATES ONLY**

- 7:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. Elections of the Specialist Commissions (Dr Montserrat Arroyo, Deputy Director General)
- 7:15 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Elections: voting modalities and quorum (Dr François Caya and Mr Rodney De-Souza, Head of WOAHA Legal Affairs Unit)
- 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Proposal and selection of candidates for the election of the Bureau of the Regional Commission, the Council and the Specialist Commissions (Dr Ximena Melón)/Zoom poll

**Session 2 (face to face)**  
**Monday, 27 May 2024**  
**(Maison de la Chimie, Paris)**

---

**Agenda**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 8:30 a.m. – 8:35 a.m.  | Adoption of the agenda (Dr Ximena Melón, President of the Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Argentina)   |
| 8:35 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.  | Confirmation of the main points agreed during the virtual meeting held virtually on May 15th (including the proposed candidates and the technical topics) (Dr Ximena Melón)   |
| 9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.  | Proposal of WOAHA Collaborating Centre for Genome Monitoring of Swine Viral Disease hosted by the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), United States of America (Dr Rosemary Sifford, Vice President of the Regional Commission and Delegate of the United States of America) |
| 9:15 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.  | Discussion on regional positions for WOAHA General Session (Dr Ximena Melón)  |
| 9:55 a.m. – 10:10 a.m. | WOAHA Incident Management System (Dr Daniel Donachie, Programme Manager, Preparedness and Resilience Department)  |
| 10:10 a.m.             | Closing of the meeting (Dr Ximena Melón)  |