

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

17 May 2022

The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas met by videoconference on 17 May 2022 at 4:00 p.m. CEST. The meeting was attended by 85 participants, including Delegates and observers from 26 Members of the Commission and representatives from 11 International or Regional Organisations:

Members of the Commission: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominican Rep, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, and Uruguay

International/regional organisations: ALA⁷⁵, CaribVET⁷⁶, FAO, FARM⁷⁷, Feedlatina⁷⁸, ICFAW, IICA, IPC⁷⁹, OIRSA⁸⁰, PROCISUR⁸¹, and SG-CAN⁸².

The meeting was chaired by Dr Wilmer José Juárez Juárez, Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Nicaragua, supported by Dr Luis Osvaldo Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas and Dr Catya Martínez Rivas, OIE Subregional Representative for Central America.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda, described in the Appendix, was unanimously adopted following a minor change in the order of topics.

2. Brief report on the activities carried out in the Region since the last General Session

Dr Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas, presented the actions carried out in response to the notification of outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF) in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. He highlighted the role of the GF-TADs as a coordination platform and the active participation of all its members, including the private sector, together with the Members of the Americas. In this respect, he highlighted the relevance of the development of the Regional Strategy for the containment and prevention of the spread of ASF in the Americas and the National Implementation Plans.

⁷⁵ ALA: Latin American Poultry Association

⁷⁶ CaribVET: Caribbean Animal Health Network

⁷⁷ FARM: Federation of Rural Associations of the MERCOSUR

⁷⁸ Feedlatina: Association of Animal Feed Industries of Latin America and the Caribbean

⁷⁹ IPC: International Poultry Council

⁸⁰ OIRSA: Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria

⁸¹ PROCISUR: Cooperative Programme for Agrifood and Agroindustrial Technological Development in the Southern Cone

⁸² SG-CAN: General Secretariat of the Andean Community

Referring to projects under development and planned, he indicated the progress of projects on antimicrobial resistance, financed by the European Union and the MPTF, as well as projects related to ASF, high health and high performance horses (HHP horses), aquatic animal health surveillance and biological risk management.

He then provided a summary of all the activities and meetings organised, including the meetings of the Regional Commission and the forthcoming Conference of the Regional Commission, the workshops for National Focal Points, as well as other relevant events. Finally, he detailed the communication activities carried out in the region, which are aligned with global campaigns and are coordinated with other international and regional organisations.

3. Organisation of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to be held by videoconference, from 8 to 9 November 2022

Dr Arnold Dwarkasing, Secretary General of the OIE Regional Commission and Delegate of Curaçao, explained that taking into account the still delicate situation in the Region in terms of post-pandemic recovery, it has been decided to hold the next Regional Conference once more in a virtual format. Full details of the event will be communicated in due course.

He added that the 27th Conference is expected to be organised in 2024 in a face-to-face format, for which he invited the Members to consider their application in terms of the venue for the event. In this regard, Dr Barcos described the requirements for such a face-to-face venue, which will be distributed to Members for their consideration. It was recommended that the formal presentation be made during the 26th Regional Conference, inviting proposals to be sent sufficiently in advance in order to be discussed within the Regional Commission.

4. Decision regarding the selection of Technical Items for the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas

Dr Wilmer Juárez Juárez, explained that, taking into account that the next Regional Conference will be held once more in a virtual format, Technical Items with and without a questionnaire will not be included in the agenda of the Conference. This is because the time and format do not facilitate the presentation of such extensive issues or the development of recommendations. The Technical Item with a questionnaire selected during the meeting of the Regional Commission in the 88th General Session, will remain on the list of items to be considered for the future Conference, which will be organised in a face-to-face format in case said item is still on-going and relevant for the Regional Commission. In due course, the Technical Item will also be selected without a questionnaire.

5. Emergencies and disasters management: Creation of networks, and support from the OIE Collaborating Centres

Dr Pastor Alfonso, Representative of the National Centre for Agricultural Health, an OIE Collaborating Centre in Cuba, presented the *Network of Collaborating Centres for Veterinary Emergencies* (EmVetNet), which the Cuban Centre forms part of, and referred to existing studies describing the capacities for preparedness and management of emergencies and disasters. He then proceeded to highlight the importance of sub-regional platforms in the Americas, especially in response to the *La Soufrière* volcano eruption and the work undertaken on the relationship between animal welfare and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, he presented the development of a list of experts in emergency and disaster management, the management of information and communications distribution lists, as well as the development of distance-learning modules on the subject, which will be available soon.

It was agreed that the integration of Veterinary Services into national emergency management systems is vital so as to achieve an adequate response that considers the health and welfare of the affected animals.

6. Proposal of three strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by the OIE through various means (*Scientific and Technical Review, Bulletin, scientific paper, technical item or during a specific activity/meeting*)

The Regional Commission proposed the following three strategic topics of global interest to be addressed by the OIE through various means:

- The role and interrelation of international organisations in emergencies such as African swine fever: assessment, identification of challenges and opportunities for improvement;
- Animal health and food waste;
- Integration of private parties in animal disease surveillance and certification systems.

7. Application from the University of Chile, Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences to become an OIE Collaborating Centre on Antimicrobial Stewardship in Aquaculture

Dr Alicia Gallardo Lagno, Representative of Chile, submitted a request to the Regional Commission in order for it to consider the Faculty of Veterinary and Livestock Sciences of the University of Chile as an OIE Collaborating Centre for the administration of antimicrobial components in aquaculture.

Dr Gallardo Lagno provided a brief description of the proposed centre and its activities, stating that full details had already been shared with Delegates.

The Regional Commission unanimously approved the proposal submitted by the University of Chile.

8. The OIE capacity-building system: from the new normality to a new future. A dialogue with OIE Members on PVS and Training

Ms Barbara Alessandrini, Head of the Capacity Building Department, introduced the evolution of the OIE capacity-building system, the needs it intends to satisfy, and the reasons that are driving this transformative process.

She reminded the participants that a number of factors have changed our lives and influenced our ways to deliver services. Technologies have helped us to overcome last years' challenges, however they cannot replace the value of human relationships.

She informed that the OIE has reflected on its capacity-building system and defined new approaches to better satisfy its Members' needs and provide more impactful services through the PVS Pathway Programme and the Platform for the Training of the Veterinary Services. New methodologies and support programmes, remote and blended options, and digitalisation are the three pillars on which the OIE capacity-building system intends to move from the new normality of the post COVID-19 era to a new future in which flexible and blended approaches are possible, thus optimising the use of human, technical, and financial resources.

Ms Alessandrini concluded by highlighting that a dialogue with Members and partners interested in understanding the new opportunities offered by the PVS programme and the OIE Training Platform and in exploiting these customised opportunities has to be established, to build scalable approaches for a collaborative growth of the Veterinary Services. This is particularly important in the light of the request for more resilient Veterinary Services, recognised by national and regional health systems, to play their role in protecting One Health.

9. **Barriers to the implementation of OIE Standards on aquatic animals: first results of the survey of national Focal Points for Aquatic Animals**

Dr Gaspar Avendano Pérez, Technical Coordinator of the OIE Observatory, shared the first findings of a recent survey of national Focal Points for Aquatic Animals. The objectives were to identify barriers preventing OIE Members from: i) implementing OIE standards on aquatic animal health and welfare, ii) notifying aquatic animal diseases, and iii) using the PVS Pathway for the aquatic animal health services. He thanked the Delegates of the Americas Region for their participation. He pointed out the most important barriers identified in the survey, such as the fact that aquatic animal health is not prioritised by government agencies, which was seen by 54% of the respondents globally, as a blocking barrier for the notification to the OIE. He also highlighted that only 9% of the respondents indicated that Chapter 4.1. of the Aquatic Code, which was adopted at the 88th General Session in 2021, is being fully implemented by them.

Dr Gaspar Avendano Pérez concluded by indicating that the report presenting the detailed results of this survey would be available during the second semester of 2022.

10. **Thematic kiosks during 89th General Session**

Dr Neo Mapitse, Head of Regional Activities Department, informed the participants about the nine OIE virtual thematic kiosks of 89th General Session and invited the participants to visit these kiosks, to interact with experts and learn more about specific activities relevant to the OIE and its mission.

CLOSED SESSION FOR DELEGATES ONLY

11. **Presentation of the new logo and acronym of the Organisation**

In order to better inform Delegates about the OIE rebranding to be presented during the General Session, a special session was held during which Ms Cecilia Westerdahl, Regional Communication officer, introduced the new OIE brand and provided details on the logo, acronym and the rationale of the rebranding.

The World Organisation for Animal Health undertook this branding change after 18 years since the current logo came out in 2003. The objectives of the rebranding were for the Organisation's purpose and scope to be more clearly understood by audiences worldwide, and to place animal health and welfare as a high priority for decision-makers, and for standards and services to be recognised and adopted. Furthermore, for the wider audiences to understand the contribution of animal health and welfare. Consultation with stakeholders was carried out at all levels including members of the public.

The new brand does not change the core mission or mandate of the Organisation which will remain dedicated as ever to promoting global animal health and welfare.

In conclusion, the new brand will give more visibility to the Organisation, and clarity on its mission to the Veterinary Services, policymakers and wider global audiences, thereby helping the Organisation to achieve its goals. It will bring, among others, more fruitful and strong partnerships with current and potential future partners, attractiveness on the Organisation's mission from professionals other than veterinarians as well as clearer understanding worldwide of its key role in the veterinary and public health sectors.

Mr Gerrit Beger, Head of the OIE Communication Department, responded to several comments from Members who, while supporting the rebranding proposal, asked questions about the pronunciation of the acronym in English in order to avoid unpleasantries, others expressed disappointment that the OIE had consulted only some Delegates and not all. Some requested for clarification regarding the cost of this project as well as the rationale behind the decision to change the brand at this juncture. Mr Berger thanked the Delegates for their comments and informed them that the item will be presented during the administrative session of the 89th General Session.

Dr Jean-Philippe Dop, Deputy Director General - Institutional Affairs and Regional Activities, also clarified that the proposal for the new institutional image had the support of the Council. He added that the proposal will not be put to a vote, as it does not impact the OIE Basic Texts nor does it imply a legal modification. However, and for information purposes, it will be presented through a Resolution during the General Session to ensure the support of Members.

12. Proposal of a Member of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas to join the Bureau of the Regional Commission for the Americas as President and conformation of the Bureau

Dr Hugo Federico Idoyaga Benítez, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Paraguay, reminded participants that the Delegate of Canada had stepped down, leaving vacant his position as President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas, which required a partial election to be held.

After a discussion including the participation of all the Delegates present at the meeting, Dr Wilmer Juárez Juárez, Delegate of Nicaragua, was proposed as President, while Dr Arnold Dworkasing, Delegate of Curaçao, was proposed as Vice-President, along with Dr Rosemary Sifford, Delegate of the United States, proposed as Secretary General.

The final composition of the Regional Commission will be as follows:

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| President: | Dr Wilmer Juárez Juárez (Nicaragua) (new proposed position) |
| Vice-president: | Dr Ximena Melón (Argentina) (voted in 2021) |
| Vice-president: | Dr Arnold Dworkasing (Curaçao) (new proposed position) |
| Secretary general: | Dr Rosemary Sifford (United States of America) (new proposed position) |

The positions will be held for a period of two years, until the election for the next three-year term of the Regional Commission, which will be held in May 2024.

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

13. Closing

The meeting officially ended at 7:30 p.m. CEST.

.../Appendix