

EU support to African veterinary services brings an end to Rinderpest, a devastating livestock disease

Almost 50 years of continued collaboration between the EU and the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) to eradicate Rinderpest is about to achieve its ultimate goal, with the official declaration of global freedom from Rinderpest foreseen for 2011. Building on such successful work, the Commission granted today EUR 30 million to further strengthen African Veterinary Services.

Gary Quince, Director for Sub-Saharan African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in EuropeAid Co-operation Office said: "*The eradication of Rinderpest is good news for African farmers and consumers. Developing and maintaining sustainable agriculture is key to guaranteeing food security in Africa as well as enabling the rural population to make a living, so diseases affecting livestock can have a major impact on people. The European Union has been a major contributor to the worldwide eradication of Rinderpest and continues its support for veterinary services in Africa through today's adopted programme.*"

The programme adopted today aims at reinforcing veterinary governance in Africa. It will improve institutional environment at national and regional levels to provide better animal health services.

The programme will build on the success of the long-term partnership of the European Commission with the AU-IBAR, which led to eradication of one of the major transboundary animal diseases affecting Africa: Rinderpest. This disease was the second "plague" to be eradicated from the world, after Smallpox. Once present in Europe, it was introduced in Africa in the 19th century and had dramatic repercussions on the continent.

Uniting many diverse organisations behind one goal, including donors, regulatory bodies, scientific institutions and administrations, an eradication campaign began in the 1960s, with the support of the EU which has contributed more than EUR 203 million in Africa since then. The eradication of Rinderpest was eventually achieved, with official declaration of global freedom from Rinderpest being foreseen for 2011.

Further improvements in animal health in Africa are however still needed to boost livestock development, and in turn increase food security and new trade opportunities, lifting livestock keepers in Africa out of poverty.

The new programme will contribute to the implementation of the Livestock Component of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union. Its strategic focuses are (i) bringing institutional change towards the establishment of adequate and affordable veterinary services at national level and (ii) strengthening regional institutions in their role of coordination, harmonisation and integration as well as providing support to individual countries.

The programme is in line with the "One Health concept", a worldwide strategy for fostering collaborations and communications in all aspects of health care for humans, animals and their various environments.

The EU's new commitment of EUR 30 million will increase its on-going contribution to the AU-IBAR activities, confirming its position as the biggest partner of the AU-IBAR. Key international organisations, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE), will also be involved in the programme.

The support will be financed under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) which is the main EU financial instrument for development aid for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

Background

Since the sixties, the European Community and subsequently the European Union have contributed to major operations in the African continent to eradicate Rinderpest. The institution now known as the IBAR, which is part of the African Union, was originally founded to coordinate the battle against Rinderpest on an Africa-wide scale. The EU has contributed more than EUR 203 million since the beginning of the eradication campaign.

It financed the first fully-coordinated mass vaccination programme which became known as Joint Project 15 (1962-1975). That was followed by the Pan African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC) from 1986-1998, which eradicated Rinderpest in many African countries. The Pan African control of Epizootics (PACE) (1999-2007) then further assisted countries and eradicated Rinderpest from southern Sudan. Through the Wildlife Veterinary Projects (2000-2003), additional funding was provided to undertake a unique wildlife sampling operation to follow the Rinderpest serological status of wildlife. The last in this series of projects is the Somali Ecosystem Eradication project (SERECU/2007-2010) which focused on surveillance in the Somali ecosystem: Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia were granted disease freedom status by the OIE respectively in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

For more information, please see:

AU-IBAR website

<http://www.au-ibar.org/>

See the presentation done during European Development Days:

["Eradication of rinderpest in Africa : a partnership success story between the European Union and the African Union- Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources"](#)

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