

**Regional cooperation programme on highly pathogenic and emerging and re-emerging diseases (HPED) in Asia**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the HPED Steering Committee**

**Bangkok, Thailand - July 1, 2010**

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Recognising that:

1. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN) are the appropriate regional intergovernmental organizations in South and Southeast Asian sub-regions to support coordination of regional programmes on HPED and other high impact zoonotic and non-zoonotic infectious animal diseases;
2. The SAARC and ASEAN have politically endorsed the launch of HPED programme and already have internal mechanisms to discuss HPED and other high impact diseases;
3. Since 1994, a corner stone of the animal health programme of FAO is the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) for transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases which has engaged in numerous regional and country projects aimed at the prevention, detection, preparedness and management of high impact diseases, including zoonoses, with notable success in strengthening veterinary service capacities in the laboratory and in the field and through the establishment of sub-regional networks;
4. FAO's Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme and the EU FMD Commission can serve as models for the elimination of high impact diseases, including those that are emerging or re-emerging. These models have components that relate to coordination, applied research, improving country-to-country engagement through networking, development of strategies that consider socio-economic realities and needs;
5. As FAO's animal health programme also includes units devoted to veterinary public health (including food and feed safety), EMPRES/wildlife, and epidemiological work dedicated to understanding disease ecology and drivers for disease emergence, maintenance and spread;
6. Significant experience on control of HPAI and Pandemic preparedness has been gained by FAO, OIE and WHO in Asia and the Pacific Region and lessons learned have a direct relevance and to control of HPED in the region;
7. The SEA-C-FMD Campaign is a highly ambitious but successful programme that has achieved significant successes since it commenced in 1997. It counts 11 Member Countries in 2010. It deals with a disease that has major adverse socio-economic impacts on food production systems and inhibits economic development, particularly in the area of trade. It has as its key objective "to coordinate animal disease control activities between countries; provide technical advice, ensure coherent strategies and seek political and financial support to achieve FMD Freedom in the Region.";

8. International standards on quality and evaluation of Veterinary Services have been adopted by 176 OIE Members, and that since 2006 the OIE is deploying the PVS Pathway, which includes initial PVS evaluations of performance of Veterinary Services using the OIE PVS Tool, PVS Gap Analysis, guidelines on veterinary legislation, and PVS follow-up evaluations, to facilitate compliance of countries with these international standards;
9. During the 76<sup>th</sup> World Assembly of OIE Delegates in May 2008, the World Assembly of the OIE reiterated the importance of focal point for animal diseases notification and requested to nominate additional national focal points for: wildlife; veterinary products; animal production food safety; animal welfare, and aquatic animals;
10. The OIE has established a rolling regional programme for the information and training of recently appointed OIE Delegates and National Focal Points;
11. The Strategic Framework “Contributing to One World, One Health - A Strategic Framework for Reducing Risks of Infectious Diseases at the Animal–Human–Ecosystems Interface” has been developed jointly by four specialized agencies—Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and endorsed by the World Bank and the UN System Influenza Coordinator (UNSIC) has been published in October 2008;
12. The European Union (EU) has signed the different components of the Regional cooperation programme on highly pathogenic and emerging and re-emerging diseases (HPED) in Asia with the main partners, namely FAO, OIE and WHO, in December 2009;
13. “A Tripartite Concept Note - Sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces” clarifying the FAO-OIE-WHO Collaboration, has been published in April 2010;
14. The Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) is a joint FAO/OIE mechanism, which combines the strengths of both organisations to achieve the prevention and control of animal transboundary diseases (TADs) worldwide and in particular to address their regional and global dimensions, and that WHO is also associated to this mechanism for zoonotic diseases of regional importance;
15. There is an existing regional coordination mechanism in place, namely the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific of the Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), which is composed of members from FAO, OIE and WHO, regional organizations including ASEAN, SAARC, and SPC, and donors;
16. Cross-border (multilateral or bilateral) collaboration for information sharing is an important activity for prevention and control of TADs and zoonoses and it will be necessary to support ASEAN and SAARC to develop framework for multilateral and bilateral cooperation covering human and animal health sectors;

The HPED Steering Committee recommends to the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific of the Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) that:

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An annual ordinary meeting of the HPED Steering Committee is organised, back to back with a meeting of the Regional Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific of the GF-TADs during the duration of the four-year HPED Programme;
2. Representatives from WHO headquarters and relevant WHO Regional Offices are invited and encouraged to attend to the above meetings;
3. The OIE is requested to involve the SEA-C-FMD RCU to contribute to the design of the FMD Vaccine Bank established under the HPED programme (country coordination, technical eligibility criteria, procedure for delivery of vaccines, etc.) and to bridge with the SEA-C-FMD Campaign;
4. FAO, as a technical implementing agency, should play an important role with OIE on delivery of veterinary vaccines and biologicals to the stakeholders in the Region. In this regard, mechanisms developed by APHCA should be taken advantage of;
5. The Programme Coordinators of the implementing agencies of the HPED Programme together with the regional partners participate in joint planning to define specific mechanisms to ensure improved coordination and synergy among the capacity building activities, including training, in the spirit of the One Health approach;
6. The international organizations increase efforts to raise the awareness of GF-TADs, One Health approach and the EU-funded HPED Programme at country level;
7. The HPED Steering Committee compliments the EU for their vision on the HPED and urges the international agencies, to work with other donors and partners to support similar programmes through international and regional agencies in other regions such as SPC and ECO (Central Asia);

#### SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The eligible countries are encouraged to benefit from the activities of the PVS Pathway, namely initial PVS evaluations of performance of Veterinary Services using the OIE PVS Tool based on OIE international standards for quality and evaluation of Veterinary Services, PVS Gap Analysis, the OIE guidelines on veterinary legislation, and PVS follow-up evaluations to monitor progress made. FAO is encouraged to be part of the national activities strengthening Veterinary Services within the PVS Pathway;
2. Countries which have not confirmed yet to the OIE their formal request for all or some of the steps of the above PVS Pathway are encouraged to do so;
3. The OIE is encouraged to work together with ASEAN and SAARC, with the support of FAO, on regional / sub-regional analysis of PVS country reports and/or country PVS Gap Analysis documents available for distribution of Donors and Partners;

4. The eligible countries are encouraged to benefit from the regional information and trainings seminars for newly appointed country Delegates to the OIE and OIE country focal points for (i) sanitary information systems (WAHIS/WAHID<sup>1</sup>); (ii) animal production food safety; (iii) veterinary medicinal and biological products; (iv) aquatic animal diseases; (v) animal welfare and (vi) wildlife;
5. FAO continues to engage with the SAARC and ASEAN Member countries to implement national activities using existing FAO structures and platforms including wildlife and veterinary public health units to strengthen Veterinary Services, including the outcomes provided by the OIE PVS Pathway and the training of OIE focal points;
6. Regional animal health information systems such as ARAHIS are encouraged, such systems should be interfaced with the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS);
7. Collaboration among FAO, OIE and WHO for joint training of public health and animal health professionals under HPED Project should be encouraged in terms of curriculum development, cost and expertise sharing.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) / World Animal Health Information Database (WAHID)