

Communiqué

One Health Ministerial Meeting To Address Zoonotic Diseases and Other Related Public Health Threats Dakar, Senegal 11 November 2016

We, the Ministers responsible for human, animal, wildlife and environmental health, and agricultural sectors in West African countries, meeting on 11 November 2016 in Dakar, Senegal;

Noting with concern that over 75% of the emerging and re-emerging diseases that have affected humans over the past decade have originated from animals or animal products, many of them with a potential to spread widely and to become global health security risks with major negative socioeconomic consequences;

Concerned about the recent unprecedented Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in West Africa which infected over 28 000 people and caused more than 11 000 deaths and devastated national economies with losses in gross domestic product estimated at US\$ 219 million in Sierra Leone, US\$ 188 million in Liberia and US\$ 184 million in Guinea;

Aware of the current outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 which steadily spread across a number of West African countries in the past two years, devastated poultry farms and is threatening human health and food security;

Concerned about the ongoing and recurring outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever and Lassa Fever within West Africa and their potential to spread to neighbouring countries.

Concerned that none of the West African countries has achieved all of the core capacities of the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005) as of June 2016 and the core competencies of the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS);

Particularly concerned that no West African country has achieved all the required core capacities for prevention, detection and response to emerging infectious disease threats, zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance (AMR);

Convinced that the climate change phenomenon, the loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems exacerbate the risk of emergence and spread of infectious diseases in animals, plants and humans;

Recognizing that the movement of domestic and wild animals across national boundaries poses potential health risks;

Recognizing that health risks at the human-animal-environment interface constitute a major health security concern that has led to recommendations that countries strengthen different collaboration mechanisms among various sectors and partners as well as with global institutions as stipulated in the Tripartite partnership of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE);

Recalling Resolution A/RES/70/1 of the General Assembly of the United Nations that adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets;

Further recalling Agenda 2063 adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union at their 24th Ordinary Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 to 31 January 2015 for a regional strategy to optimize the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans;

Recalling the first Inter-ministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Africa held in Libreville, Gabon in 2008 that culminated in the adoption of the Libreville Declaration to promote an integrated approach to policy-making in the health and environment sectors;

Aware of the critical roles and responsibilities of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), their neighbouring countries, the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO) and the Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC) in supporting the implementation of the above frameworks through enhancing multisectoral coordination and in-country capacity for prevention, detection and response to epidemics in West Africa;

Noting the urgent need for the operationalization of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Disease Surveillance and Control (RCDSC) in line with the decision of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government at the 47th and 48th ordinary sessions held in Accra in May 2015 and Abuja in December 2015, respectively, and the need for cooperation with neighboring countries;

Noting the urgent need for the operationalization of the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC) in line with the decision at the 40th ordinary session of the Heads of States and Government conference held in Abuja, and the need for cooperation with neighbouring countries;

Commending the strong national leadership of ECOWAS countries for establishing functional partner coordination mechanisms which significantly contributed to the successful implementation of harmonized public health interventions to control the recent Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic;

Greatly recognizing and appreciating the commitment, mandate and roles of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO) and the Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC), the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and several partners, including: the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC), the World Bank (WB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in advocacy, technical guidance and resource mobilization to implement the One Health approach in West Africa.

1. RESOLVE AND COMMIT OUR GOVERNMENTS to:

- (1) Put in place robust national mechanisms for intersectoral coordination and partnership to facilitate the implementation of the existing global and regional initiatives, better harmonization and sharing of information among animal, human and environmental health sectors in accordance with the required One Health approach;
- (2) Support institutionalization and the ownership of the One Health approach at all levels through a dedicated domestic budgetary provision for One Health activities;

- (3) Enhance cross-border collaboration and information sharing among countries;
- (4) Adopt and/or implement a regional One Health framework and other initiatives for improving health security;
- (5) Participate in the subregional hazard and risk assessment and identification of common priority diseases and their drivers for both human and animal health sectors by conducting national risk assessments;
- (6) Enhance collaboration between projection, early warning and surveillance networks for human health, animal health and food safety; and environmental monitoring;
- (7) Enhance national and subregional alert mechanisms for common priority outbreak-prone diseases in both human, animal and environmental health sectors;
- (8) Routinely share surveillance information through coordination mechanisms across sectors, countries, partners and international bodies as appropriate and promote the use of electronic platforms;
- (9) Using opportunities such as the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and other related initiatives, build and sustain joint national core capacities for compliance with the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005), and the World Organisation of Animal Health's (OIE) international standards and ensure their integration into the environmental monitoring systems;
- (10) Support the collaboration and networking of animal and human health laboratories at national, subregional and regional levels to improve prediction, detection, timely and accurate confirmation and further characterization of emerging pathogens and antimicrobial resistance surveillance;
- (11) Support the activities of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Disease Surveillance and Control (RCDS) and the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC) and National Codex Alimentarius Committees in building the capacity of West African countries in prevention, detection and response to public health events, irrespective of origin and in improving knowledge on the human-animal-environment interface through conducting operational research for evidence-led decision making;
- (12) Urgently conduct and/or regularly update joint external evaluation (JEE) of WHO International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) core capacities and Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway core competencies, and joint preparedness and response planning at country, subregional and regional levels through the whole of society approach;
- (13) Ensure better integration of the One Health approach in national and regional multi-sectoral plans for environmental protection, resilience and food security and in the implementation plans for relevant multilateral agreements;
- (14) Ensure monitoring of planned milestones to achieve the One Health approach through a robust coordination mechanism with clear roles and responsibilities and accountability of relevant stakeholders;

(15) Present progress reports on the implementation of the Regional Strategic Framework as well as the recommendations of the technical meeting on One Health during committee meetings, summits, presidential and ministerial meetings;

(16) Contribute to the surge capacity for rapid response to Public Health Events of International Concern within West Africa;

2. CALL UPON OUR SUB-REGIONAL, REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OUR PARTNERS (WHO, OIE, FAO, AU Commission and affiliated institutions, UNEP, IOM, USAID, US CDC, the World Bank, AfDB and other new partners) to:

(1) Jointly advocate and conduct domestic and external resource mobilization for the implementation of the Regional and national frameworks for One Health;

(2) Provide technical support to Member States in implementing the Regional Strategic Framework for One Health;

(3) Jointly mobilize resources for the operationalization of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Disease Surveillance and Control (RCDSC) and the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC);