

## **33rd Conference of WOA H Regional Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

(New Delhi, India, 13-16 November 2023)

### **Recommendation No 1**

#### **Preventing Zoonoses at Source – towards enhancing capacity for prevention, rapid detection, awareness, control, and research on zoonoses**

##### **CONSIDERING THAT:**

1. About 72% of the emerging infectious diseases that have an animal origin or reservoir have a wildlife origin and the Asia and the Pacific Region has witnessed emergence of several important zoonoses including SARS, high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses, Nipah virus, and incursion of rabies in previously free areas/islands, and that zoonoses continue to pose significant threats to humans and animals, including due to climate and habitat change;
2. Veterinary Services are a critical partner in ensuring global health, and WOA H has developed international standards and guidelines as well as initiatives, strategies and tools, in collaboration with partners, to support Members in ensuring global animal health and the operationalisation of the One Health approach;
3. The 31st Conference of the Regional Commission for the Asia and the Pacific recommended Members to establish or sustain Multisectoral Coordination Mechanisms (MCMs), for zoonotic issues, in consultation and agreement with relevant partners and stakeholders, and with identification of reliable functions, mechanisms, infrastructure and resources, under a clear governance;
4. The importance of reviewing the progress and challenges faced by Members' Veterinary Services in the Region on zoonotic diseases, the state-of-play for MCMs, research on vector-borne zoonoses, information sharing, and risk assessments since the two questionnaire surveys in 2019 that identified difficulties in terms of government support, availability of resources and technical capacity, hampering the creation of new MCMs in some Members;
5. The One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA), which was launched in October 2022, is a collaborative, participatory effort among FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA H and supported by scientific advice from the One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) to strengthen country-level collaboration, communication, capacity building, and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-environment interface;
6. The 2023 survey questionnaire identified that Members multi-sectoral coordination capacities appeared to be low regarding either the coordination mechanisms, response coordination to zoonotic diseases events or the engagement of the environment and wildlife sectors, and that solid MCMs and collaboration frameworks between the wildlife, environmental and veterinary sectors are key;
7. The epidemiological capacity, surveillance and laboratory systems are critical for early warning, event confirmation and rapid response, whereas effective biosecurity systems and an effective multisectoral workforce strategy and workforce training are essential for prevention and research on zoonoses; and
8. Various initiatives on OH at global and regional levels for long-term financing to strengthen critical pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities in low- and middle-income countries, including contribution to reduce the risk of pandemics by strengthening environmental aspects of OH.

## THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Members recognise the importance of One Health risk based approach in the prevention of zoonoses, future pandemics and other health threats at the animal-human-environment interface;
2. Members equitably allocate sufficient and sustainable funding of the Veterinary Services as well as provide domestic and international resources across health sectors to support multisectoral One Health coordination activities;
3. Members develop policy frameworks and strategies to support research, surveillance, laboratory capacities as well as to improve multisectoral coordination of the response to zoonoses;
4. Members strengthen multisectoral coordination and collaboration mechanisms in surveillance and laboratory diagnostic capacities by creating effective national monitoring networks under the OH approach, including with the environmental and wildlife sectors;
5. Members strengthen the leadership and high-level advocacy capacities of Veterinary Authorities on policy development towards policy and decision makers, key partners and stakeholders, to clearly define the role and impact of the animal health sector in OH systems, and share responsibilities to improve national multi-sectoral collaboration;
6. Members in the Asia and the Pacific Region give a strategic importance to capacity building to develop and maintain a competent and appropriately resourced Veterinary Services workforce in order to prevent zoonoses at source including by partnering with the Veterinary Education Establishments;
7. Members take advantage of several important global initiatives such as the Pandemic Fund, PREZODE, ZODIAC, among others to implement the OH Joint Plan of Action and to focus on prevention including biosecurity and biosafety measures;
8. Members implement WOAHA standards and recommendations regarding laboratory diagnostic specimen referral and transport to strengthen surveillance and diseases intelligence and information sharing among Members for a collective and coordinated preparedness and response at national, regional and global levels;
9. Members maintain transparency through timely and comprehensive reporting of animal health and zoonotic events to WOAHA as described in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*;
10. WOAHA continues to support Members through the PVS pathway and associated capacity building programmes to improve the performance of their VS and the workforce, in compliance with WOAHA standards, particularly in management and regulatory aspects as well as in terms of animal health surveillance systems, laboratory capacities, biosecurity, research and awareness regarding prevention of zoonoses; and
11. WOAHA works closely with its Quadripartite partners, as well as with resource partners to support Members in building the capacity of their Veterinary Services to effectively manage the risk of zoonoses and continue to advocate at the highest-level for a strong collaboration between Veterinary, Public Health, Environmental Health Services and biodiversity as well as, other relevant authorities.