

**Dr Monique Éloit, Director General, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)**

Speaker notes

## **High-level Webinar: International Organisations and their Members Facing the Global Crisis Together**

*3 September 2020*

Your Excellency Minister Nigel Adams,

Honourable OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría,

Distinguished guests,

- The COVID pandemic has revealed the **interdependence** of many aspects of our world: interdependence between countries, between economies, and between humans and nature.

Given its leading role in the field of animal health, the OIE, together with FAO and WHO, has been promoting the **One Health concept** for several years. One Health recognises that human health and animal health are interdependent and bound to the health of the ecosystems in which they exist. This is evident today when 60% of human diseases are of animal origin and 75% of emerging infectious diseases affecting humans are of animal origin. Moreover, the spread of diseases in wildlife, and dramatic changes in biodiversity, deforestation rates, the impact of climate change, etc., all play an important role in the dynamics of animal and human diseases.

As a consequence, **a coordinated approach based on a more transdisciplinary approach is necessary at the global level.**

The OIE has historically cooperated with WHO and FAO, in the form of **the Tripartite Alliance**, to put the One Health vision into practice, with different areas of coordination: research; development of standards and guidelines; development of global strategies on priority topics (including the development of awareness campaigns); and capacity building for national authorities responsible for human health, animal health and food safety.

Nevertheless, the current crisis has revealed the need to **strengthen other existing partnerships**, as well as to think outside the box and **coordinate with new partners**, to integrate economic and social impacts, climate change or ethical considerations into our work.

- **Our present time is filled with uncertainty but also with possibilities for innovation.**

How do we operate in a time of uncertainty about the present and the future? How can international organisations and governments anticipate and innovate to bolster their preparedness for the next phases of the crisis and ensure their resilience for future emergencies? One approach is to use **Foresight**. The OIE has taken concrete steps to develop its Foresight capability by creating a dedicated position within our management structure and by learning from the experiences of other international organisations such as the OECD. We want to understand what could be heading our way and identify activities to ‘future-proof’ the OIE, and, in turn, the Veterinary Services of our Members.

In addition, the **use of new technologies** can provide unprecedented opportunities for the OIE and Veterinary Services to strengthen their resilience and improve their effectiveness.

Digitalisation is one of the strategic objectives of the OIE for the next five years, exemplified by the development of the **OIE Observatory**. Collecting and analysing data on the use of OIE International Standards will enable us to better understand the challenges faced by our Members in implementing standards and to design targeted capacity-building activities to improve implementation.

- **The OIE is adapting to the ‘new normal’ and preparing for future crises.**

The restrictions on movement (of staff and Members) has supported a transition to **teleworking** and **virtual meetings**. These restrictions in addition to considerations related to climate change are creating a huge impetus to reduce the amount of physical meetings and is increasing pressure to find longer-term solutions.

In response to this, the OIE has firstly initiated legal work to **revise its basic texts and rules of procedure**; the biggest challenge within this task is how to adapt the decision-making processes, such as voting arrangements, to a digital or virtual environment. Nevertheless, we fully appreciate that virtual meetings will never totally replace the social contact of physical meetings, which contributes to establishing trust between Members and other stakeholders.

Secondly, the OIE has undertaken an **after-action review** of its response to COVID-19 in order to improve its institutional preparedness and resilience to exceptional events which may impact business continuity.

- The recent development of the **Compendium of International Organisations’ Practices for Effective International Rulemaking** under the OECD’s leadership provides international organisations with an excellent opportunity to share experiences, raise lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis and develop good practices to enhance international cooperation.

The OIE has already implemented the following key principles set out in the **Compendium**:

- improving **transparency** in the **development** of OIE standards
- **supporting its Members in the implementation** of OIE standards through the **PVS Pathway**, the OIE's flagship capacity-building platform for strengthening the performance of national Veterinary Services
- **monitoring** the implementation of **standards** in a more systematic fashion through the OIE Observatory
- **coordinating with other international organisations**, in particular with FAO and WHO through the Tripartite Alliance.

In addition, the **Compendium** presents other key principles in terms of **stakeholder engagement** and **evaluation** that offer new perspectives on how the OIE can improve in the future. The OIE's **7th Strategic Plan**, which has been developed for the next five years of the organisation's future, provides us with an excellent opportunity to put into practice the key principles enshrined in the **Compendium**.

- **Veterinarians usually say that animal diseases know no borders, but crises also know no borders. To tackle global challenges, solutions can only come from strong international cooperation. To conclude, I would therefore like to thank the OECD for this initiative and underline the significant value of the work undertaken within the framework of the International Organisation Partnership. The OIE fully supports the Joint Statement on this matter.**