

The OIE is pleased to announce the First OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation, to be held in Djerba Tunisia on 7-9 December 2010. The Conference has the objective of strengthening good governance of national animal health systems and veterinary services of OIE Members, consistent with the OIE mandate of safeguarding animal health and animal welfare and contributing to improve public health and food security globally.

Veterinary legislation is indeed an essential element of the national infrastructure that enables Veterinary Authorities to efficiently carry out their key functions, including epidemio-surveillance, early detection, reporting, rapid response, prevention and control of outbreaks of animal diseases, including zoonoses, animal production food safety, animal welfare and the certification of animals and animal products for export. In the face of increasing global trade, climate change and the emergence and reemergence of diseases that can rapidly spread across international borders, the Veterinary Services must be supported by effective and modern legislation in order to face new threats and to meet the OIE criteria for quality and performance of their essential functions.

The OIE is aware that in many developing countries veterinary legislation is outdated and inadequate to address the today's challenges and those of the future. At the request of Members, the OIE has developed guidelines on the essential elements to be covered in veterinary legislation. As a follow up to an evaluation of the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) using the OIE PVS Tool and at the request of Members, the OIE conducts missions to help governments that wish to modernize the national veterinary legislation and thereby strengthen the veterinary services to help meet the OIE standards.

The Conference will feature presentations from speakers representing international organizations and national Veterinary Services and experts on legislation (both general and veterinary), and will provide advice on good governance of Veterinary Services based on modern and efficient legislation. During interactive sessions, participants will be invited to share their experiences and to identify future needs and priorities for the OIE to address.

The Conference will address the following topics:

- Analyse the situation with veterinary legislation globally, including veterinary public health;
- Provide legal information on the general legal principles to be used in the context of veterinary legislation;
- Raise international awareness of the OIE international standards for quality and performance of Veterinary Services;
- Give information and practical advice on how to modernise veterinary legislation and to raise awareness and educate veterinarians in the public and the private sector on their role and responsibilities according to the legal framework;
- Review the experiences of OIE Members in the domain of veterinary legislation, including the challenges and priorities of developing countries;
- Discuss how OIE Members can improve governance using the OIE PVS framework (initial PVS evaluation, PVS Gap Analysis, PVS follow-up including Veterinary Legislation Initiative); and OIE guidelines for veterinary legislation;
- Identify the tools and support that can be provided to national Veterinary Services in developing countries, as appropriate to their needs and under the OIE PVS Framework;

- Launch a discussion on the future needs and priorities to strengthen Veterinary Services, including recommendations to the OIE on activities to strengthen veterinary legislation, including providing appropriate initial and continuing training of veterinarians in the public and private sector.

Approximately 400 participants are expected to attend the Conference, including:

- OIE National Delegates and other national government representatives
- International organisations/countries/private sector organisations, individual experts
- Representatives of International Organisations having official agreements with the OIE

The conference will take place over 2 1/2 days, comprising Ministerial Statements and keynote speakers and on day 1, technical presentations on day 1, 2 and 3 and a panel discussion and the Conference Recommendations on day 3. Speakers will be supported with simultaneous interpretation in English/French/Spanish and Arab during all plenary sessions.