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PVS Pathway as an advocacy tool for increased investment in veterinary services in Africa

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The missions of the OIE and the values of transparency, rigour and international solidarity that accompany them are closely aligned with those of the main donors of development aid such as the World Bank. National Veterinary Services are considered a global public good and their strengthening, which is the aim of the OIE PVS Pathway, helps to achieve the dual objectives of the World Bank, namely:

- **End extreme poverty**, by reducing the share of the global population that lives in extreme poverty to 3% by 2030 by reducing the proportion of global population living on less than USD 1.90 a day to below 3% by 2030,

- **Promote shared prosperity**, by increasing the incomes of the poorest 40% of people in every country.

Indeed, through its action, and notably thanks to the PVS Tool, which is the main focus of this analysis, the OIE supports the development and strengthening of the livestock sector, which in many countries constitutes the main source of employment, income and food for a significant segment of the population, and very often the most vulnerable.

Livestock production plays a major role in world agriculture and on average accounts for 43% of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP). In some countries this percentage can exceed 80%. In Africa, the livestock sector accounts for 30 to 80% of agricultural GDP, depending on the country. A study published in 2018 found that in 2015 [1] agriculture accounted for more than 37% of GDP in countries characterised by extreme fragility and an average of 35% of GDP for countries in protracted crisis. In these conditions, one can see how livestock performance can have a major impact, either positive or negative, on the economy and the social situation in these countries.

1. The World Bank and livestock: an example of investment in livestock development

In the 1970s and 1980s, development aid and other interventions in the livestock sector showed generally poor results in terms of the objectives, which at that time were concerned with improving productivity.

These poor performances were attributed to various factors: agricultural policies offering little incentive and chiefly oriented towards crop production; wrongly designed projects, such as those promoting inadequately controlled use of technologies that ultimately proved inappropriate (e.g. importing exotic breeds that were more productive but not well adapted); and institutional weaknesses. These poor results then led to a loss of interest on the part of many donors, including the World Bank, and a drastic reduction in international aid for livestock development, compounded by macroeconomic problems in Europe and Latin America.

Thus, funding allocated to the livestock sector by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, one of the five institutions that make up the World Bank Group) totalled

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USD 10.38 billion for the period 1974–1979 compared to USD 4.45 billion for the period 1986–1992. [2]

Logically, therefore, the attention and support given to Veterinary Services also varied. In Africa, for example, funding for veterinary activities represented 17% of the funding devoted to livestock before 1983 and 40% between 1984 and 1989. However, given the reduction in livestock-related interventions, the actual amounts allocated to veterinary activities also showed a marked decline.

In 2001, the World Bank alerted policy-makers of developing countries and international donor agencies to the need for reinvestment in the livestock sector, notably because of its indispensable and growing role in the following areas:

a) Agricultural development,
b) Income generation to reduce poverty,
c) Environment, in terms of positive and negative impacts,
d) Human health, including the threat posed by new and re-emerging diseases,
e) Food and nutritional security,
f) Development of national and international trade.

To this list we must now add a growing awareness of the major role that livestock rearing can play, notably in its pastoral dimension, in the prevention of phenomena related to organised crime affecting certain regions in Africa.

For all these reasons, the World Bank sees livestock production, especially in Africa, as a major lever that can help to fight poverty, reduce inequality and promote economic and social development in a sustainable manner. More generally, through its multifunctionality, livestock contributes directly to at least 8 of the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), which the international community set itself for the year 2030. Indirectly, it contributes to all 17 SDGs.

The World Bank's agricultural portfolio, including livestock, is now growing rapidly, especially in Africa, and in West Africa in particular.

For the 2018 financial year (July 2017 / June 2018), it totalled USD 5.7 billion, including 3.4 billion (i.e. 60%) in Africa. Of the latter amount, 48% (i.e. USD 1.6 billion) is for West Africa through regional or national projects, specifically dedicated to livestock or including 'livestock' components.

In this region, the investments in activities to strengthen the Veterinary Services are estimated to account for a third of the World Bank funding devoted to livestock.

2. Why does more need to be invested in livestock and especially in the Veterinary Services, in Africa?

Good potential and promising perspectives …

Africa is a continent rich in natural resources and specifically in livestock, having nearly a third of the world's livestock population, with over 300 million cattle, nearly 2 billion poultry, 350 million goats, 330 million sheep and 35 million pigs. The continent also has 23 million camels and 18 million equids. The intrinsic value, production potential and economic benefits, both individual and collective, that one might expect from such a livestock population are huge and there could well be major social co-benefits (in terms of health, nutrition and education).

Thus, due in particular to current demographic trends and the expected and hoped-for improvement in living conditions for the most vulnerable populations, it is anticipated that the market for animal products in Africa will rise sharply. For example, annual per capita consumption of meat and milk, currently standing at 14 kilos and 30 litres, respectively, is expected to increase to 26 kilos and 64 litres by 2050. Given that the population is predicted to increase during the same period from 1.2 billion to over 2.5 billion, demand could quadruple. [3]

… that remain unexploited…

Yet, in Africa today, animal productivity is stagnating, poverty remains widespread and imports, though sharply increasing, are struggling to alleviate food insecurity. The percentage of people living in extreme poverty ranges from less than 5% in North African countries to more than 80% in some sub-Saharan countries. Nearly 75% of very poor people facing food and nutritional insecurity live in rural areas, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In most cases these are agricultural households that also raise farm animals. Livestock rearing is essentially practised by small producers with little or no access to the inputs, techniques or technologies (especially veterinary services and products) that would help them to increase the productivity of their animals.

A study [4] carried out in 2016 in the Sahelian countries of West Africa and in the Horn of Africa found that: (i) for pastoral systems, the total number of poor people was 21.7 million out of a total population of 25.3 million, indicating a rate of poverty among pastoralists of 85%; and (ii) for agro-pastoral systems, there were 54.5 million poor people out of a total population of 71 million, a poverty rate of 77%.

… due to specific constraints…

Africa is also a continent of vast tracts of land, cross-border mobility that is hard to control and devastating disease epizootics. Although rinderpest could eventually be eradicated after many years, thanks to the joint efforts of national authorities and especially the Veterinary Services, animal producers and the international organisations concerned, including the OIE, FAO and AU-IBAR, a number of diseases remain. Peste des petits ruminants, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, foot and mouth disease, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, African swine fever, avian influenza and Newcastle disease, to mention but a few, compound with fearsome efficacy the damage inflicted by diseases transmitted by arthropod vectors, such as Rift Valley fever, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever and trypanosomoses, or by parasites. In the best of cases, the result is a substantial decline in productivity; in the worst cases, however, the morbidity and mortality rates in epizootics can reach 100%. It should also be remembered that these diseases are often zoonoses, some of which can have severe or even fatal consequences [5]. As pointed out by the OIE, 60% of human infectious diseases are zoonotic and more than 75% of the pathogens responsible for human emerging infectious diseases originate in animals.

… and major under-investment!

How can one reduce this unsustainable burden on households and on the economies of countries?

The following analysis [4], carried out in 2005, clearly demonstrates how the disruption of a cattle production and marketing system can have a systemic destabilising dimension at the level of a country. Following an episode of Rift Valley fever in Kenya, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States suspended their imports of livestock from the Somali region in Ethiopia. The region's GDP fell by USD 91 million (25%) in nominal terms and the livelihoods of pastoralists were severely impacted: income from pastoralism fell by roughly 25% to 30%; herd composition changed, with a move from cattle to goats and camels and the number of animals per herd declined. The poorest pastoralists changed their consumption habits by reducing their purchases of food and grains, which had a knock-on effect on traders, brokers, transporters and even clothing retailers, who suffered a negative effect on their income and the volume of business.

First of all, by combatting these animal health scourges more effectively, by: disease prevention and especially vaccination; surveillance, and the control and management or elimination of animal diseases. To be effective, all these actions require Veterinary Services with sufficient means in terms of human, material and budgetary resources, a well-adapted and coherent legislative, regulatory and sub-regulatory framework, and high-quality competencies that are regularly refreshed and updated, all of which are aspects considered by the OIE PVS Pathway.

Yet meeting these needs comes at a cost. Moreover, even if the failure to honour the commitments made in Maputo in 2004 by African Heads of State [6] (i.e. to allocate at least 10% of national budgetary resources to the agricultural sector) has adversely impacted the whole of the agricultural sector, the consequences have generally been greater in terms of support for the livestock sector, which is even more neglected than the rest of the agricultural sector and usually suffers from a low level of public investment.

And therein lies a major paradox that needs to be emphasised and analysed to try to correct it. Whereas it contributes to the agricultural GDP of some countries at high levels (44% in Mauritania, 53% in Chad, nearly 60% in Sudan, values that often do not include the indirect contributions, through the supply of fertiliser [in the form of manure] and draught power), the share of public expenditure on agriculture allocated to livestock generally remains below 10%.

3. How can the PVS Tool help to advocate for an increase in investments in Veterinary Services in Africa?

Even though an increase in investments in the Veterinary Services can be considered legitimate in all regions of the world given the intensification of trade and the multiplication and spread of health hazards related to animals and products of animal origin, Africa requires specific advocacy since, as outlined above, the situation is both potentially very promising and particularly critical. This emphasises the importance of the *Livestock Development Strategy for Africa – LiDeSA* [7] adopted by African leaders in 2015. One of its four strategic objectives is *to enhance animal health and increase production, productivity and resilience of livestock production systems*, all of which are core concerns of the PVS Pathway.

The approach proposed by the OIE through the PVS Tool is systemic. It addresses the strengthening of Veterinary Services in all its dimensions, ranging from governance to more technical aspects, considering both the public sector and the private sector, and including legislation and regulations, disease prevention and control, inspection, animal health and the safety of food of animal origin from production to marketing.

The PVS Pathway is sustainable in that it offers an iterative cyclical mechanism of evaluations, programming and actions, allowing strategic planning and successive phases of improvement, while considering national specificities and integrating the choices and capacities, including financial, of Governments.

Based on international standards adopted by consensus and aimed at the harmonisation of practices, the PVS Pathway provides States with the assurance that, provided they comply with these standards, their Services will be effective, and their competencies will be recognised by other countries and partners. In a similar way, with a view to making improvements, it provides the means to compare, using objective criteria and with a progress-oriented approach, the situation of each country in relation to the others. Lastly, it presents all the characteristics needed to measure, from one cycle of operations to another, the developments achieved by a country in strengthening its Services or, where applicable, to reveal any obstacles that need to be removed.

With all these characteristics, the PVS Pathway is proving to be a key factor in supporting the development of the livestock sector, which, as indicated above, performs a range of societal functions, which are particularly important in Africa: poverty reduction, food security, public health, economic development, trade, among others.

Besides the technical and institutional qualities, we have just described, the PVS Pathway, notably thanks to the PVS Gap Analysis, offers an undeniable comparative advantage, in that it presents, in a single strategic planning document, a precise, costed national roadmap, without risk of duplication or omissions. For the various potential funding bodies, whether national or international, this provides an additional guarantee of efficiency, a factor that is generally highly valued and therefore likely to encourage their involvement and financial contribution. [8]

4. Why is the PVS Tool specifically of interest to donors such as the World Bank?

The strengths described in the previous section appear absolutely of interest to any donor. There are additional considerations that make the PVS Pathway a tool of particular interest for the World Bank.

First of all, as a product of the OIE, the PVS Tool, the basis of the PVS Pathway, benefits from a presumption of quality and compliance with the expectations of the OIE's Member Countries. This is not an *a priori* judgment but rather the *a posteriori* result of a detailed analysis of the governance and functioning of the OIE, already recognised by the World Trade Organization as the sole international standard-setting organisation in its sphere of competence. The PVS Tool, like all the OIE's products, standards and recommendations, is the result of collaborative and consensual work on the part of its Member Countries. It is therefore consistent with the strategic orientations of these countries, which as a result validate its quality. In the same way, the World Bank recommends using, whenever feasible and relevant, the OIE's vaccine banks and supports the strategies promoted by the Organisation, such as the *Global strategy for the control and eradication of PPR*.

Furthermore, like the World Bank, the OIE enshrines its vision and actions within the framework of international agendas, and notably the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals it is helping to achieve. In particular, the World Bank pays special attention to the preservation and strengthening of global public goods, such as the Veterinary Services, which remain incontestable instruments for ensuring equity, especially in favour of the most vulnerable.

5. How does the World Bank integrate the findings and recommendations of the PVS Pathway in the orientations and activities it promotes?

During the definition of strategic orientations when projects supported by the World Bank are being prepared, references to PVS Pathway reports are made as directly as possible. Among the most recent projects, in preparation or already being implemented, which build on these reports, one can mention those relating to Cameroon, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

As a first example, the Livestock and Fisheries Development Project in Ethiopia states that, within the framework of the enhancement of the animal health system, the *key activities to be financed are based on the results of the OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway and will include the development of a partnership between the public authorities, the private veterinarians and the associative actors*.

Secondly, the Burkina Faso Livestock Sector Development Support Project, PADEL-B, which, in its sub-component on improving livestock producers' access to animal health services, states that *the sub-component will build on the results of the OIE PVS evaluation to enhance the long-term capacity of the country to sustainably reduce livestock mortality and other losses caused by animal diseases, thereby contributing to increased livestock productivity*.

Lastly, regarding the flagship Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS), which started in 2016, the project appraisal document (PAD) states that *the project design draws upon findings and recommendations from each country's PVS Pathway reports,* and that *PVS Pathway reports provide objective and harmonised qualitative and quantitative elements helping to identify priorities and guide investments.* The PAD also states that *information from the six PVS Pathway reports was consolidated at the regional level to design a consistent regional programme*. [9]

Thereafter, the definition of activities to be carried out is based on a careful reading of PVS Pathway reports and the relevant integration of their recommendations, taking into account available financial resources.

Conclusions

The OIE PVS Pathway appears to be the reference tool which, by helping to strengthen and harmonise the Veterinary Services, enables them optimally to fulfil their many crucial functions for the benefit of populations. In Africa, of course, where needs remain high, but also more widely, on a global scale, as this is now the level at which the health, social and economic problems in which the Veterinary Services have a role to play must be considered and addressed as inclusively as possible.

The tool exists; it is effectively being implemented and applied; its findings are objective; its recommendations are clear and relevant. We have a joint responsibility to make the best possible use of it by promoting its objectives, which go far beyond simply the functioning of public services, as uninitiated observers (or even policy makers) might wrongly suppose, and its contributions. This requires good ownership by all the actors involved:

- Firstly, by the *Veterinary Services*, and in particular the Veterinary Authorities, which should integrate its recommendations in their day-to-day operations and in advocacy initiatives with the relevant Authorities, especially those responsible for financing the actions of the Veterinary Services;
- Next, by *governments*, which should take its recommendations into account in defining their public policies and programming their budgets, and also, where appropriate, in their advocacy initiatives with donors;

– Lastly, by *donors*, which should systematically rely on the PVS Pathway reports for planning and calibrating, in a concerted and coordinated fashion, their support actions for the livestock sector.

To facilitate ownership, we consider it would be helpful to initiate a process of reflection on a possible adjustment to the frequency and methods (possibly lightened but still regular) with which PVS Pathway reports are followed up and updated. As indicated, periodic monitoring (PVS evaluation follow-up missions) would provide a progress report on implementation of the capacity-building programme. A dynamic view will often make a far greater impression on policy-makers and donors than a single, sometimes outdated report.

For the World Bank, and no doubt for other donors, the information and findings resulting from a follow up of this kind would be a support that is even more directly exploitable during the preparation phase of projects.

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