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Ministerial Statement 93rd WOAHA General Session Paris, May 2026

We, the Ministers and high-level representatives responsible for animal health, agriculture, livestock, food systems and related sectors, meeting on the margins of the 93rd General Session of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), reaffirm our shared commitment to strengthening animal health and welfare as a cornerstone of resilient societies, sustainable economies and global health security.

In a world marked by increasing biological risks, climate-related pressures, evolving trade dynamics and growing demand for food of animal origin, we recognise that animal health and welfare, including antimicrobial resistance are no longer sectoral issues, but aspects of concern for governments and other actors in food value chains. Animal health and welfare are fundamental to a comprehensive One Health approach, serving as a prerequisite for food and nutrition security, economic stability, safe trade, poverty reduction and the prevention of health crises at the human–animal–environment interface.

We further recognise that digital transformation and the active engagement of youth are critical enablers of resilient and future-ready animal health systems.

We commend WOAHA for placing investment in animal health and welfare at the centre of its global agenda and for convening this ministerial dialogue as a platform for political leadership, strategic reflection and collective action.

Animal health and welfare as a strategic investment

We acknowledge that animal health and welfare generate benefits that extend far beyond the livestock sector. Strong Veterinary Services help prevent and control transboundary animal diseases, reduce the risk of zoonotic spillover, safeguard trade, protect livelihoods and contribute to environmental sustainability. They are a critical component of national preparedness to handle animal and zoonotic diseases, and of the global architecture for pandemic prevention, preparation and response .

We further acknowledge the importance of modern, digitally enabled Veterinary Services, including:

- Integrated disease surveillance systems
- Digital reporting and early warning platforms
- Data analytics and artificial intelligence for risk assessment
- Strengthened laboratory information systems

We also recognise the need to invest in youth as a strategic human capital, ensuring the next generation of veterinarians and animal health professionals are equipped with the skills, tools and opportunities to lead the transformation of the sector.

Yet, despite their high return on investment, animal health systems remain chronically underfunded. Veterinary Services are often expected to manage expanding mandates with limited and unpredictable resources. This situation undermines the ability of the Veterinary Services to deliver essential public and global public goods, including disease surveillance, emergency preparedness, laboratory capacity, biosecurity and antimicrobial resistance mitigation.

We therefore agree that investment in animal health and welfare should be recognised as a strategic and preventive investment that protects economies, reduces future crises and strengthens societal resilience.

In this context, we highlight the pivotal role of robust preventive strategies, notably through sustained support for the research and deployment of high-quality vaccines. We recognize vaccination as one of the critical tools to enhance herd immunity, safeguard livelihoods, and reduce the global necessity for antimicrobial resistance mitigation.

We underpin the importance of legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks that provide clarity, predictability and incentives for long-term engagement by both public and private actors.

A whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach

We emphasise that strengthening animal health and welfare is of critical importance and requires coordinated action across government as Ministries responsible for agriculture and livestock cannot act alone. Ministries of finance, economy, trade, health, environment and development cooperation all have a stake in the outcomes of animal health policy under a One Health approach.

We therefore commit to promoting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including youth engagement, to animal health and welfare, ensuring that its contribution to national priorities such as food security, trade competitiveness, job creation, climate resilience and health security is better understood and reflected in national planning and budgeting processes.

We also recognise the essential role of farmers, veterinarians, producer organisations, the private sector, civil society, research institutions and communities play. Their engagement is indispensable to translating policies into practice, improving compliance with standards, and fostering good behavioural change along food value chains of animal origin.

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The role of evidence and international cooperation

We stress the importance of robust data, transparency and economic analysis to inform policy and investment decisions. Evidence on the burden of animal diseases, the costs of inaction and the returns on preventive measures is critical to prioritise interventions and mobilise political and financial support.

We encourage the use of tools and expertise, including digital technologies, such as those provided by WOA and its Collaborating Centres, to strengthen economic analysis, risk assessment and investment planning in animal health and welfare.

We reaffirm the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, particularly in addressing the global public good dimensions of animal health. Strengthened Veterinary Services everywhere contribute to reducing transboundary risks of animal diseases and zoonoses. We therefore call on development partners and international financial institutions—to recognise animal health and welfare as a priority area for investment.

We also underscore the importance of WOA's normative role and its mandate to set international standards that facilitate safe trade, protect animal health and welfare, and support Members in strengthening their systems.

Political Commitments

Through this ministerial dialogue, we reaffirm our political commitment to:

- Elevate animal health and welfare, including antimicrobial resistance, within national policy agendas and investment frameworks;

- Strengthen sustainable financing for Veterinary Services, including both routine operations and emergency preparedness;
- Prioritise preventive measures, in particular by supporting the research, development, and timely contribution of animal vaccines.
- Promote fair and context-appropriate cost-sharing arrangements across public and private stakeholders;
- Support whole-of-government coordination and cross-sectoral collaboration under a One Health approach;
- Accelerate digital transformation in animal health systems, including surveillance, diagnostics and traceability;
- Invest in youth development, skills and leadership in the animal health sector and promote innovation ecosystems that empower young professionals and entrepreneurs;
- Use evidence and economic analysis to guide prioritisation and demonstrate the value of investing in animal health and welfare;
- Work with WOAHA and international partners to mobilise the political attention, technical support and financial resources needed to secure stronger animal health systems worldwide.

We invite WOAHA to continue facilitating dialogue among Members, partners and stakeholders, to document and share good practices, and to support countries in designing and implementing sustainable investment strategies for animal health and welfare.

By acting together, we can ensure that animal health and welfare are fully recognised as essential foundations of resilient food systems, thriving economies and a safer, healthier future for all.

