

## Session 7:

Towards global harmonisation and evaluation of the veterinary curriculum, and an internationally recognised diploma

# Contribution from veterinary deans of southern Africa

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In September, 2009, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) organised a Regional Seminar, in Arusha, Tanzania, for Deans of Veterinary Faculties and Registrars of Veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSBs) in Southern Africa on "Veterinary Education in Southern Africa: matching demand and supply", during which participants raised their concerns over the state of the veterinary curriculum and the quality and governance of veterinary services in Southern Africa. The meeting observed that Veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSBs) are an autonomous authority regulating Veterinarians and Veterinary para-professionals. Thus a VSB is a very important and essential part - a kingpin - regarding good veterinary governance and in meeting the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (TAHC) standards on quality and performance for veterinary services in a country. Even though, VSB's have been in existence in some Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries for many years, with wide variations in legal basis; autonomy; objectives; authority; functions and responsibilities, composition; administrative procedures, etc., in quite a number of SADC countries there is no VSB at all. Veterinary training in most parts of Southern Africa has focused on producing veterinarians to serve their livestock sectors although adjustment of curricula has occurred due to socio-economic changes and an increased privatization of veterinary services, but also to cover issues of globalization and the increased risk of the spread of trans-boundary animal diseases. In a world where countries are closely inter-linked due to globalization of trade and food, increased volume and speed of international travel, global climate change, and the related emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases, participants agreed that veterinary education must face new challenges and continually evolve to meet societal demands in the field of food security, food safety, public health and animal welfare. It was also observed that Veterinary Statutory bodies as well as Veterinary Schools in Southern Africa must work together to address the dynamic needs and demands of the veterinary profession. The meeting came up with a set of recommendations to improve the quality and governance of veterinary services and to improve and facilitate regulation and harmonization of the veterinary curriculum in the OIE member countries of Southern Africa. The details of these recommendations will be discussed at the conference on "Evolving veterinary education for a safer world" in Paris, France, 12-14 October, 2009.

