

## “One Health”

Sixty percent of the pathogens that cause diseases in humans are of animal origin. These diseases, known as zoonoses, can be transmitted by domestic or wild animals.

Animal diseases that are transmissible to humans, such as avian influenza, rabies, brucellosis and bovine spongiform encephalopathy, present a public health risk worldwide and must imperatively be prevented or combated at every level, including the global one.

The most effective and economical solution to protect humans is to combat all zoonotic pathogens through their control at the animal source. This requires a new political approach leading to specific investments in terms of governance, particularly with regard to the allocation of public and private resources.

Pathogens that are not zoonotic but have a negative impact on the production of animal-derived protein should not be overlooked. This is especially important in developing countries as problems affecting the quantity and quality of food production and its availability can also have serious public health consequences.

The “One Health” concept is founded on an awareness of the major opportunities that exist to protect public health through policies aimed at preventing and controlling pathogens at the level of animal populations, at the interface between humans, animals and the environment.

Implementation of these policies places not only veterinarians and animal owners in the front line but also people who regularly come into contact with wildlife and the environment, in particular those involved in fishing and hunting and managers of protected areas. They involve new mechanisms requiring all these stakeholders to inform one other and act in a concerted manner, in liaison with public health managers, usually working under the auspices of the Minister of Health in our Member Countries, whether they are State officials, local government staff or physicians in private practice.

Putting the “One Health” vision into practice has been facilitated by a formal alliance on this topic between the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The three Organisations have published a joint Concept Note clarifying their reciprocal responsibilities and their objectives in this field ([see note](#)). They have also decided to choose the following as priority topics for their joint actions: rabies, which still kills nearly 70,000 people every year, zoonotic influenza viruses (those causing certain types of avian influenza, for instance) and antimicrobial resistance.

For its part, the OIE is continuing its normative work on animal disease prevention and control methods and on health standards relating to the safety of international trade in animals and animal products, with priority being given to the prevention of diseases transmissible to humans.

The OIE also publishes international standards on good governance of the public and private sector components of the Veterinary Services, including the initial training and continuing education of the various actors involved. Furthermore, it offers Member Countries an independent evaluation of their Veterinary Services’ compliance with the OIE’s quality

standards, along with special tools to calculate the investments and legislative and technical reforms needed to bring their Services into line with these quality standards.

This service provided by the OIE, known as the 'PVS Pathway', has already benefited nearly 120 Member Countries. It also includes an optional "One Health" pilot evaluation tool, already successfully tested in three countries, designed to help all countries, at their own request, to establish closer collaboration between Veterinary Services and Public Health Services, in compliance both with the quality standards published by the OIE and with the obligations on WHO Member Countries stemming from the International Health Regulations they have adopted.

All these synergies between animal health, public health and environmental specialists, applied at a local, national and global level, will undoubtedly contribute to the constant and simultaneous improvement of public health and animal health worldwide.