ADVISORY NOTE TO MEMBER STATES

Addressing the essential role of animal health in pandemic prevention. Recommendations to members states for a new pandemic accord

The [Action for Animal Health](#) coalition advises member states to include actions to address weaknesses in animal health systems in their submissions to the INB.

We are encouraged that the Special session of the World Health Assembly agreed that a new accord will focus on early detection and prevention of pandemics, as well as the "**One Health**" approach. However, we are deeply concerned that this ambition will fail if the new accord does not include actions to strengthen animal health systems.

The need for prevention

A new pandemic accord must focus on **preventing** the emergence of pathogens with pandemic potential. We cannot rely on reactive measures taken after animal-to-human transmission has already happened.

The root cause of pandemics lies in how pathogens move from animals to people ([Bernstein et al 2022](#)). This means that the **substantive content** of the accord must include provisions to stop spillover of zoonotic disease from animals to people in the first place.

Principles to prevent pandemics should align with OHHLEP's definition of One Health. This definition recognises that One Health aims to optimise the health of humans *as well as* animals and ecosystems.

Unsustainable human activity and the exploitation of nature means diseases are emerging more frequently from animals, and jumping into human populations. Domesticated animals can be sources of disease and can amplify diseases emerging from the wild ([ILRI and UNEP, 2021](#)). Poor livestock care and unsustainable farming practises are a major contributor to growing global antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Recommendations

The substantive content of the treaty must address prevention of the transmission of zoonotic diseases from animals to people by strengthening animal health systems.

Specifically, action must be taken to:

- **Improve surveillance systems and capacity to secure early detection of animal disease in wildlife and domestic animal populations**, and ensure the ability to respond effectively, from the community level to the global level. This includes improving surveillance and preventative measures at critical points like farms, border crossings and wet markets, as well as better data sharing between countries.
- **Increase participation of community animal health workers and community members**, especially rural and marginalised communities (like pastoralists who regularly interact with animals), as sentinels of surveillance for monitoring animal health in their local areas.

- **Increase and upskill the animal health workforce**, who are vital in preventing zoonotic diseases. Skilled frontline workers play a vital role in building the resilience of communities and health systems to respond to threats, including the detection, prevention and treatment of zoonotic diseases in wildlife and domestic animals.
- **Provide access to good quality veterinary medicines and vaccines**, and ensure animal health professionals have the skills to use them properly, to prevent zoonotic diseases and to reduce the risk of antimicrobial resistance.
- **Improve animal care practises to improve immunity and minimise the routine use of antibiotics.** Antimicrobial resistance can increase the risk of disease emergence.
- **Improve livestock care and welfare practises to support ecosystem health.** A reduction in livestock death and disease means fewer animals will need to be reared for the same output and will use fewer natural resources as a result. This will support a reduction of land use and encroachment on natural habitats, limiting transmission of emerging diseases from wildlife to domestic animals.

In addition to preventing pandemics from zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance, implementing these recommendations will have knock-on benefits for food security, nutrition, climate resilience and income security of some of the poorest people on our planet and communities that depend on livestock, contributing to Agenda 2030. With these targeted interventions, multiple Sustainable Development Goals can be addressed.

Finally, we recommend that all submissions to the INB are done in collaboration with Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Environment.

Thank you for taking our recommendations into consideration.

For more information please visit Action for Animal Health website, or contact Ellie Parravani at ellie.parravani@thebrooke.org. Action for Animal Health is an expert group that is willing to advise member states during this process.

Our recommendations are based on our Call to Action for Animal Health

Coalition members:

AU-IBAR
Brooke Action for Horses and Donkeys
Compassion in World Farming
Dogs Trust Worldwide
Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)
Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed)
International Livestock Research Association (ILRI)
SEBI-Livestock (Centre for Supporting Evidence-Based Interventions in Livestock, University of Edinburgh)
Send a Cow
Soi Dog Foundation

World Veterinary Association (WVA)
Vétérinaries Sans Frontièrs International (VSF International)