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#Press Release 2#

Ribeira Grande de Santiago (Cabo-Verde), Animal Health Capital City of West Africa

Under the leadership of the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) and its technical (FAO, ECTAD, AU-IBAR, WHO, BROOKE WA) and financial (European Union, World Bank, African Development Bank, Swiss Cooperation) partners, the annual meeting of the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Networks (RAHN) opened this Monday, 19th September 2022, at the Vulcano Hotel in Cape Verde, under the effective hostage of the Cape Verdean Minister for Agriculture and Environment, Dr. Gilberto Silva, and the ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, Ms. Massandje Touré-Litsé.

This 8th meeting brings together Directors of Veterinary Services, focal points of veterinary laboratories (RESOLOB) and epidemiological surveillance (RESEPI) and leaders of the veterinary orders of all ECOWAS Member States plus Mauritania and Chad.

The focus of the 2022 edition is: "*Horizon 2030: Situation, challenges and prospects for the eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants and Rabies and the control of Foot and Mouth Disease and Contagious Bovine Peripneumonia, priority animal diseases in the ECOWAS region*", with the main objective of assessing progress made by ECOWAS Member States in the eradication or control of PPR, Rabies, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and CBPP, and following-up the implementation of action plans for RESEPI and RESOLAB.

The various speakers at the official opening of the meeting recalled the need for collaborative work to overcome transboundary animal diseases in the region. The first day of the meeting on 19th September 2022 reviewed the status of implementation of the recommendations of the 7th meeting held in 2021 in Côte d'Ivoire.

The presentation of the host country, Cabo Verde, highlighted the urgent need to support this country in its efforts to be recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health as a country free of PPR and Foot and Mouth Disease. To this end, the epidemiological field surveys, sampling, results of serological analyses, training of technical staff, the latest dates of declarations of the two diseases and its insular position were presented.

ECOWAS, through its Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), is committed to supporting its member countries, through RAHC which has developed important regional strategies and regulations related to the control and prevention of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses in collaboration with its technical and financial partners.

To recall, the ECOWAS Specialised Centre for Animal Health (RAHC) was established by Supplementary Act in 2012 with the mandate to (i) coordinate actions that contribute to food security and nutrition, (ii) improve livelihoods by improving animal health and welfare, (iii) develop animal resources by ensuring the formulation of relevant regulations, and (iv) coordinate actions on the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses. Since its operationalisation in



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2018, the Centre has developed and adopted various regulatory texts and regional strategies, including the Regional Animal Health and Welfare Framework Strategy, the Regional Livestock Identification and Traceability Strategy (ECOLITS), the Regional PPR Eradication Strategy, the Regional Rabies Control Strategy and the Regional Trypanosome and Tick-borne Disease Control Strategy and Action Plan. With the support of financial partners, the Centre is implementing its strategies through the implementation of several projects to support national actions in disease control and livestock development.

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