Presentation of OIE honorary awards
Paris, 25 May 2014

During the 82nd OIE General Session, Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, President of the OIE, reminded the participants that in 1985 the Assembly had decided to grant honorary awards to members of the veterinary community for outstanding services to veterinary science and to the OIE. She then indicated the persons selected by the Council in 2014 to receive the awards: Dr Emilio Juan Gimeno (Argentine) for the Gold Medal and Dr Manuel Antonio González Cano (Panama) for the Meritorious Service Award.

The President commended Dr Gimeno and recalled the major accomplishments of his career and his outstanding services to the OIE, in his capacity as Delegate of Argentina, Regional Representative for the Americas and President of the OIE, and to the veterinary world, and presented him with the Gold Medal.

The President then delivered a speech in praise of Dr González Cano and presented him with the Meritorious Service Award.

The recipients thanked the President and the Assembly.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) was announced as the recipient of the 2014 World Veterinary Day prize (see Bulletin, no. 2014–3, p. 19).

Global Health Security Agenda

On 26 September 2014, the Director General of the OIE gave a speech in front of the international decision-makers attending the Fourth Meeting of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), organised in Washington, D.C., in the presence of United States President, Barack Obama, and representatives from the governments of more than 40 countries.

Dr Bernard Vallat highlighted in his speech the animal health perspective and its crucial interdependence with public health in improving human health worldwide. He reminded delegates of the OIE’s key contribution in accelerating progress against all global disease threats, since preventing diseases at their animal source is vital in protecting human health.

consequence of a multitude of factors and, in combination with the potential for deliberate threat, can only be addressed through a multi-faceted and well-coordinated global strategy.

That is why the OIE, which is the intergovernmental standard-setting body for animal health and the pre-eminent source of early warning and monitoring of animal diseases, is committed to a robust participation.

For the past 90 years, we have, through our global network, successfully coordinated the international control of animal disease. It’s our job, it’s our passion, and it has become an ever-growing shared responsibility as a global public good.

In this respect, we offer five unique platforms that are both essential and available to contribute to a successful GHSA:

1) Firstly, we set international standards for disease prevention and control methods and the quality of national animal health systems because good governance is the most critical factor for the control of animal diseases, including zoonoses. The OIE PVS Pathway – for the improvement of Performance of Veterinary Services – offers independent expert assessments to enable countries to identify and address gaps in their Veterinary Services’ capacity, including veterinary education and public–private partnerships, to prevent, detect and respond to animal disease threats.

2) Secondly, we assist our 180 Member Countries to evaluate and improve their compliance with these intergovernmental standards. The OIE PVS Pathway – for the improvement of Performance of Veterinary Services – offers independent expert assessments to enable countries to identify and address gaps in their Veterinary Services’ capacity, including veterinary education and public–private partnerships, to prevent, detect and respond to animal disease threats.

3) Thirdly, the OIE and WHO have jointly developed a Guide to assist Member Countries to improve compliance with both the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR) and OIE standards on the quality of Veterinary Services. Our joint WHO–OIE national workshops facilitate better cooperation and strategic planning between public health and animal health services.

4) Fourthly, the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) is the foremost comprehensive source for the early detection, monitoring and transparent reporting of animal diseases, including zoonoses. This global, real-time link is critical for early warning of, and rapid response to, disease events.

5) Finally, our global network of 296 Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres and more than 1,300 National Focal Points constitutes an ongoing and permanent scientific information and global emergency response system worldwide.

In summary, these five platforms are the backbone of global animal disease control. The OIE has established platforms and connected teams in place, ready to support the achievement of the GHSA goals. Ebola, influenza, and West Nile virus have all emerged first in developing countries which have not had the capacity to implement the OIE standards to detect, prevent and respond to these diseases of animal origin. With appropriate commitment, we can expand animal disease warning and monitoring systems worldwide.

Furthermore, we have the tools to assist countries to improve their national Veterinary Services’ capabilities and their strategic cooperation with national public health services. In short, we are enthusiastic and prepared to be part of the solution to the short-term objective of improved zoonotic disease prevention and control, and to the longer-term issues such as vaccine development and alternatives to antimicrobial use in animals.

We look forward to offering you every avenue of assistance as we work together to accelerate progress against all global disease threats in collaboration with our national and international partners, WHO and FAO.

By protecting animals we are preserving our future.

Dr Bernard Vallat
Director General of the OIE
26 September 2014

Communique from the White House: