

Conclusions and Recommendations of the 5th Regional Steering Committee Meeting of GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific

Recognising that

1. Regional GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific is well established and accepted by all stakeholders as a coordination and consultation mechanism for the control and prevention of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) and Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) as well as zoonotic diseases in the region.
2. GF-TADs provides coordinating platform for the two major international animal health organisations (FAO and OIE), as well as WHO, Sub-Regional organisations, Regional Organisations, national Veterinary Services, in collaboration with donor/partner agencies to promote synergies and avoid duplication of activities in addressing issues critical for preparedness, prevention and control of TADs and EIDs.
3. It is important to follow a system approach focusing on strengthened public-private partnership relevant to the control of animal diseases that have significant impacts on market and trade, to maximise contribution to food security and better human livelihood.
4. The progress of the on-going EU-funded HPED programme is appreciable, with due note taken of the conclusions and recommendation of the 2nd HPED Steering Committee. More specifically, the engagement of ASEAN and SAARC secretariats and the establishment of Regional Support Units (RSU) for the control of highly pathogenic emerging and re-emerging diseases (HPED) under EU- HPED Programme was a milestone of GF-TADs achievement.
5. The official declaration by the OIE General Assembly held in May 2011 and the FAO Ministerial Conference in June 2011 of Global Eradication of Rinderpest is historical achievement and a model of collaboration between the OIE and FAO and national VS that could be used as an example to reach the future goals of GF-TADs.
6. Active participation of WHO, from headquarters and regional offices (SEARO and WPRO), in this meeting demonstrates increasing adoption of the one health approach in addressing zoonotic diseases and other high impact EIDs, in promoting animal and human health partnership and the involvement of WHO in the GF-TAD context.
7. Rabies remains a major public health and animal health problem in many countries in the region and calls for increased political commitment at national and regional levels, and the further involvement of Veterinary Services in favour of actions aimed at animal sources, in view of the forthcoming Global Conference on Rabies, September 2011.
8. The current incursions of Transboundary Animal Diseases (FMD in East Asia, HPAI in many countries, and Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) in South-East Asia) continue to have high social and economic impacts, as well as public health in member countries in the region.

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Version After circulate_Final- 2 Aug 2011

9. Rapid intensification of livestock production and new farming systems in response to rising demand for meat, milk and eggs, requires improvement of Veterinary Services to have the capacity to prevent, diagnosis and control outbreaks.
10. HPAI is endemic in some countries in the region due to multiple factors such as inadequate biosecurity in production and market chains, and ineffective disease control measures.
11. Recent HPAI outbreaks in HPAI-free countries suggest a role of wild birds in the transmission of the virus to domestic poultry, but the complex interactions of H5N1 infection between wild birds and domestic poultry is not well understood.
12. The re-emergence of FMD in proven FMD-free countries in East Asia and the presence of FMD endemic countries in South and South-East Asia re-emphasise the need for regional cooperation, information sharing, and transparency in disease reporting, which are critical elements for control and eradication of FMD.
13. The Government of Japan has offered to establish a new regional programme on FMD control (OIE/JTF FMD Control Project for the East Asia Region) including relevant workshops and capacity building activities.
14. The Global FMD Control Strategy to be launched during the FAO/OIE Conference on FMD in collaboration with the Government of Thailand, in Bangkok 2012 provides, an opportunity to mobilise additional resources to enhance global and regional control of FMD.
15. SPC region has no major TADs and needs to maintain preparedness to prevent incursion of new diseases. In response to the request from SPC the Government of Japan offers to support a sub-regional meeting.

Recommend that:

1. GF-TADs should continue to advocate resources from donors to continue to address capacity building to strengthen Veterinary Services in compliance with OIE standards. The OIE PVS Pathway (PVS evaluation, PVS Gap Analysis and PVS Pathway follow-up missions) in the developing countries should be given high priority in order to continue building capacity of key national institutions, including better functioning veterinary services with the necessary authoritative powers to implement essential control measures and regulations.
2. The conclusions and recommendations of the 2nd HPED Steering Committee meeting as endorsed by the 5th GF-TADs Steering Committee should be followed up and implemented.
3. The Veterinary Services must be supported by effective and advanced legislation to address increasing incidence of high impact transboundary emerging and re-emerging diseases, while meeting OIE criteria for quality and performance of their essential functions.
4. Epidemiology of influenza A viruses should be studied to better understand the interaction and transmission dynamic between wild bird species and domestic poultry.

5. Surveillance of influenza A viruses in domestic livestock should be conducted in the region, using OFFLU as a mechanism for information sharing and data analysis, to better understand the diversity of the viruses and potential risks in animals and humans.
6. Countries should continue to be provided long-term supports to reduce the domestic burden of avian influenza as well as risks of emergence and spread of disease to other countries and regions, in line with the FAO/OIE Global Strategy for Prevention and Control of H5N1 HPAI and the recent FAO publication on preventing, controlling and eliminating H5N1 in endemic countries.
7. Addressing FMD in endemic countries should be an important component of global and regional FMD strategies and efforts should be made through the GF-TADs umbrella to seek funds for inter- and intra-regional collaborative efforts.
8. In order to provide justification for significant additional investment in regional and global FMD control, analysis of socio-economic impacts in endemic countries as well as of actual and possible outbreaks in FMD free countries should be completed where possible prior to the Global FMD Conference in Bangkok. The experience and lessons learned from recent FMD outbreaks in previously FMD free countries should be documented and made publically available.
9. A meeting of sub-regional country representatives, international organisations including OIE and FAO, and key donors should be convened in East Asia to define the process leading to development of national strategies and a sub-regional roadmap toward FMD control and progressive eradication.
10. The on-going engagement of countries in East Asia through FAO financial and technical support to address the FMD in the countries and the region should be well acknowledged as an efficient mechanism in cooperation and collaboration. Both initiatives by the Government of Japan and FAO should be well coordinated and synergised.
11. Global GF-TADs FMD Working Group assesses world vaccine production capacity of FMD vaccines complying with OIE International standards in order to meet future demands related to in the context of the Global FMD Control Strategy.
12. Countries as well as International Organisations and donors/partners are called upon to make strong political commitment to combat rabies at national, regional and global levels through increased collaboration between veterinary and public health sectors focusing on control measures aimed at animal sources.
13. Supports to member countries should be increased to conduct epidemiological studies, and strengthen the capabilities for diagnosis, control and management of swine diseases such as PRRS and CSF.
14. The Regional Organisations (ASEAN, SAARC and SPC) should play a pivotal role in bringing coherent effort of individual countries to produce to sustain the progress in controlling the TADs at regional level.

15. ASEAN and East Asian countries continue to foster technical cooperation and political commitment in addressing priority TADs in the region under the “ASEAN plus three” mechanism.
16. Given the recent progress in regional coordination through CVOs’ meeting and establishment of RSUs, the countries of the SAARC region and donors are encouraged to invest resources in regional control of FMD and other priority TADs.
17. The implementing agencies and the development partners should engage more closely with the SAARC Secretariat in implementation, monitoring and coordination of the on-going project.
18. The GF-TADs initiative should be continued and should give due consideration to the specific needs of SPC member countries to sustain on-going efforts through the recently completed PRIPP project to maintain their preparedness against incursion of TADs and preventative activities
19. Assistance should be given to SPC to review the resolutions and recommendations of the 2009 SPC sub-regional GF-TADs meeting, with the view to confirming their continued relevance, and, to identify key issues that need to be addressed by short, medium or long term activities.