CONTINENTAL MEETING ON VETERINARY EDUCATION

*Improving quality of veterinary training for enhanced veterinary services and socio-economic development*

05-07 July 2017, DAKAR-SENEGAL

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

The First Continental Meeting on Veterinary Education whose theme was “Improving Quality of Veterinary training for enhanced veterinary services and socio-economic development” was held between 05 to 07 July 2017 in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting was organized under the aegis of the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Inter-State School of Veterinary Sciences and Medicine of Dakar (EISMV). It was attended by 105 delegates from 37 African countries. The delegates were Deans or their representatives from Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) from 26 countries and Heads of Veterinary Statutory Boards (VSBs) from 33 countries. Other delegates were the Director of AU-IBAR, Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy and Director General of the EISMV, Prof Kaboret. The meeting was opened by Dr. Khadim GUEYE, representing the Senegalese Minister of Livestock Breeding and Animal Production. The meeting was closed by H. E. Madame Aminata MBENGUE NDIAYE, Minister of Livestock and Animal production.
OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The global objective of the meeting was to contribute to the improvement of veterinary training for enhanced veterinary services and socio-economic development in African Countries. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To share information on continental strategic frameworks and other guidelines informing transformation of livestock and agriculture education and training;
- To take stock of the quality of the veterinary education;
- To share knowledge and experiences on the harmonization of veterinary training curricula, the development of accreditation mechanisms to promote the mobility of students and to agree on the way forward;
- To propose a roadmap for the establishment and operationalization of the African Association of Veterinary Education Institutions (2A2E-V);
- To discuss strategies for mobilizing resources for sustaining the activities of the network.

PROCEEDINGS

To provide the context of livestock development in Africa a Key presentation on ‘Continental Frameworks informing livestock development in Africa (Agenda 2063, CAADP/Malabo commitments and Livestock Development Strategy for Africa-LiDeSA)’ was made.

The theme was subdivided into 3 sub-themes (three sessions) as follows;

- Improving quality of veterinary education in the context of changing societal and industry needs;
- Promoting the harmonization of veterinary curricula and development of accreditation mechanisms;
- Strengthening National, regional and continental networks to promote quality veterinary education.

For each subtheme a key note presentation was made, followed by panel and plenary discussions. The participants had also breakout sessions dealing with key topics that required further elaboration.

The meeting also received a presentation on optimal approach to implementing a Quality Management System in Veterinary Education Establishments.

CONSIDERING

1. That Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) are operating in a rapidly changing environment, increasing demand for animal and animal products,
2. That the strengthening of veterinary education is key to enhancing the quality of both public and private veterinary services delivery;

3. That the lessons learned from the implementation of CAADP clearly indicate that a main focus going forward should be on promoting learning and development of competences that respond adequately to the needs of the agricultural value chains;

4. That progress towards addressing the challenges in VEES has been uneven and some institutions continue to face unresolved challenges arising from inappropriate responses to existing challenges thus affecting the quality and relevance of curricula content and delivery leading to a mismatch between knowledge and skills of the graduates and the industry needs and aspirations of the society;

5. The urgent need to adapt the veterinary training curricula to countries’ needs and guidelines of the World Organizations for Animal Health (OIE);

6. The need to enhance the quality of teaching and supervision of veterinarians and veterinary professionals to ensure quality and ethical standards;

7. The importance of accreditation processes as a powerful signals for quality of Veterinary training at continental, Regional and National levels. The multiplicity of tools and indicators for evaluating the quality of veterinary education, lack of harmonized framework/methodologies for evaluating the quality of veterinary training in VEEs;

8. The need for quality assurance systems in VEEs that are verifiable and sustainable;

9. Lack of a continental quality assurance framework and absence of an African evaluation and accreditation body for VEEs;

10. The weak Regional networks for VEEs, lack of a continental platform for VEEs, low use of communication tools and poor communication between VEEs;

11. The low involvement of stakeholders including, employers and veterinary associations in the VEE evaluation process;
12. The absence of veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSBs) for veterinarians and para veterinarians in some countries, underfunding of VSBs in some countries and lack of clear institutional mandate in other countries;

13. The varied capacity of VEEs, disparity of curricula, quality of training programmes and duration of study programmes from one veterinary education establishment to another;

14. The need to strengthen VEEs and VSBs through enhanced networking between themselves and with other associations like the Africa Veterinary Association, twinning and improved communication;

15. The important role played by VSBs in their regulatory role for veterinarians and veterinary-paraprofessionals and training in VEEs;

16. The need for reliable information on VEEs, VSBs and Veterinary Associations among others;

17. The need for regional and continental harmonization of veterinary curricula to promote quality training, mobility of students and faculty and recognizing the need for a step by step process towards this goal;

The participants made the following recommendations:

1. Reform training programs to reflect global dimensions and at the same time meeting the continental, regional and national needs of the industry and the Society;

2. Integrate OIE day one competencies in the training curriculum and support this with requisite infrastructure including skills laboratories, libraries, clinics and hospitals;

3. Develop/strengthen pedagogical skills of the faculty and delivery approaches centered on the student and based on practical training with coaching and mentorship up to professional integration;

4. That Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) should observe a stepwise approach towards regional and continental harmonization of veterinary curriculum including content and duration of the study programs;

5. Strengthen Quality Assurance systems in veterinary education establishments (continental, regional and national levels) and work towards the establishment of a continental framework and a mechanism for quality assurance/management;

6. That a Continental Framework for the evaluation of the quality of veterinary education including the periodicity of evaluations should be put in place;

7. That VEEs should undertake progressive upgrading of their facilities to meet emerging needs and challenges;
8. That networking of African VEES with other VEEs in other regions and associations such as the World Veterinary Association, with opportunities for learning should be enhanced and that initial steps should include sharing the outcomes of the meeting with the World Veterinary Association;

9. That AU-IBAR and Technical partners should lobby with Member States that have not established Veterinary Statutory Bodies to do so with clear mandate and responsibilities through an act of parliament;

10. That the ongoing efforts by AU-IBAR and technical partners for the establishment of databases for Veterinary Colleges/veterinary schools/faculties and Veterinary Statutory Bodies/veterinary Orders should be enhanced;

11. That VEEs should take advantage of emerging ICT technologies for exchange of information among members of networks;

12. That the establishment of a Network for the Veterinary Statutory Bodies in Africa be given priority by AU-IBAR and Technical partners to enhance their regulatory role;

13. Accelerate the process of setting up of the African Association of Veterinary Education Institutions (2A2E-V) and plan the launch of the Association in July 2018 in Cairo. The platform will be a platform for peer learning, information sharing and a catalyst for the implementation of the recommendations.

Done in Dakar on 7 July 2017
Signed and sealed by
The participants