World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) and CITES agree to collaborate on animal health and welfare issues worldwide to safeguard biodiversity and protect animals

Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and Mr John E. Scanlon, Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), signed recently an agreement to deepen the collaboration between the two organisations. This agreement provides a formal foundation for expanded communication, cooperation and collaboration in order to protect CITES-listed species and conserve biodiversity by ensuring the efficient implementation of surveillance and disease control measures needed to protect animal and human health worldwide.

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Geneva/Paris, 4 December 2015 – Rabies, Ebola haemorrhagic fever, West Nile Fever, Avian influenza, Brucellosis, Foot and mouth disease: these are only a few examples of well-known, emerging, or re-emerging diseases that are originally found or circulated in wildlife and which potentially have huge human and animal health, or socio-economic consequences. Considering that over 60% of pathogens responsible for human diseases are of animal origin and that a majority of these pathogens are coming from wildlife, wildlife disease prevention, monitoring, and control are believed to be crucial factors for safeguarding biodiversity and public and animal health worldwide. “The role played by the Veterinary Services in each country is essential to carry out early detection, prevention and surveillance of these diseases. Their transmission can be amplify by the global trade in wildlife and can lead to human diseases outbreaks as well as threatens livestock production and rural livelihoods, native wildlife populations and the health of ecosystems”, said Dr Bernard Vallat. Consequently, it is in the public interest that all diseases for which wildlife act as a reservoir are dealt with under a collaborative “One Health” approach whereby a sentinel benefit from greater attention of the international community can be achieved. Within the framework of the overall mandate to improve animal health and welfare, the OIE assists its 180 Member Countries to address disease impacts on wild animals. In this regard, a permanent Working Group, composed of world-renowned experts, has been addressing wildlife diseases since 1994. In addition, the OIE’s 6th Strategic Plan (2016-2020) identifies as a major consideration the importance of influencing policy design, education, research and governance on worldwide issues, which include the interface between eco-system health and animal health, the protection of endangered animal species and the impact of the loss of biodiversity on disease occurrences. This goal is closely linked with the objectives of CITES, a legally binding agreement with 181 States Parties, to protect listed species, to conserve biodiversity and to contribute to its sustainable use by ensuring that no species of wild fauna and flora becomes or remains subject to unsustainable exploitation through international trade. In this context, this agreement signed between OIE and CITES aims to strengthen the collaboration between the two institutions in developing and disseminating relevant science-based standards, guidelines and recommendations on disease prevention, detection, and control as well as measures for safe trade and the elaboration of sustainable and inter-operational policies related to disease risk management at the interface between wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. This cooperation will apply to such fields as safe legal international trade in and transport of wild CITES-
listed animals, the safe and rapid transport of biological samples from these animals for diagnosis or identification, particularly to the OIE Reference Centres network, the prevention and control of invasive alien species and the combating of illegal trade in wildlife. CITES is both a trade and a conservation convention that uses trade-related measures to achieve its conservation objectives. It is also the first, and possibly remains the only, global convention to directly address several wildlife welfare and health issues, albeit in relation to a limited number of issues, and primarily concerning the transport of live specimens in trade. The word “health” appears 9 times in the text of the Convention, primarily in the context of preparation and shipment of species in trade. Commenting the significance of the agreement signed today, CITES Secretary-General Mr John E. Scanlon said “This agreement provides a great opportunity for the CITES Secretariat to work more closely with the global organization that has been mandated to improve animal health, which has direct implications for human health, and animal welfare worldwide. These are the sorts of practical synergies that are needed to more effectively implement CITES; in this case ensuring that we maximise the links between CITES trade measures and the globally accepted standards set up by the 180 member States of OIE, both in regulating legal trade and in combating illegal trade in wildlife.”

See more:
• CITES website
• OIE Portal on Biodiversity
• OIE Factsheet on Wildlife diseases
• Training Manual on wildlife diseases and surveillance
• Health Risk Analysis in Wild Animal Translocations
• WAHIS-Wild

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About OIE The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is an intergovernmental organisation with a mandate from its 180 Member Countries to improve animal health and welfare worldwide. According to the World Trade Organisation, the OIE is the reference standard-setting international organisation. It is responsible for ensuring transparency of the animal disease situation worldwide, including diseases transmissible to humans, for the publication of disease prevention and control methods as well as for safeguarding the sanitary safety of world trade in animals and animal products, and ensuring food safety from their production phase. The OIE works with the permanent support of 301 Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres and 13 Regional and Sub-regional Offices worldwide. Learn more about OIE by visiting www.oie.int or connecting to: Twitter - Facebook - Youtube - Flickr

About CITES With 181 Parties, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) remains one of the world's most powerful tools for wildlife conservation through the regulation of trade. Thousands of species are internationally traded and used by people in their daily lives for food, health care, housing, tourist souvenirs, cosmetics or fashion. CITES regulates international trade in over 35,000 species of plants and animals, including
their products and derivatives, to ensure their survival in the wild with benefits for the livelihoods of local people and the global environment. The CITES permit system seeks to ensure that international trade in listed species is sustainable, legal and traceable. CITES was signed in Washington D.C. on 3 March 1973 and entered into force on 1 July 1975. Learn more about CITES by visiting www.cites.org or connecting to: Twitter - Facebook - Youtube - Flickr