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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольствен ная и сельскохозяйств енная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
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CONFERENCE

Thirty-seventh Session

Rome, 25 June - 2 July 2011

Declaration on Global Freedom from Rinderpest

Executive Summary

Detailed evidence has been provided by all countries and territories that the world has attained freedom from rinderpest. This information has been verified by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and is being conveyed to the Governing Bodies of FAO and OIE by the Joint FAO/OIE Committee on Global Rinderpest Eradication.

Conditions are therefore met for the Conference to adopt, through a Resolution, a *Declaration on Global Freedom from Rinderpest and on the Implementation of Follow-up Measures to Maintain World Freedom from Rinderpest*. The content of the declaration is similar to a declaration which was adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE held from 22 to 27 May 2011. The Resolution recognises this outstanding global achievement and stresses the importance of custodianship of the rinderpest virus and vaccines available in laboratories or their safe destruction. The Declaration before the Conference for adoption is contained in document C2011/LIM12.

Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to:

1. Adopt the Resolution containing the Declaration on Global Freedom from Rinderpest and on the Implementation of Follow-up Measures to Maintain World Freedom from Rinderpest;
2. Request FAO to implement follow-up measures to maintain worldwide freedom from rinderpest;
3. Urge the membership to assume its duties and responsibilities to safeguard worldwide freedom from rinderpest.

I. Introduction

1. The eradication of rinderpest has been a goal sought over the last century through national, regional and international programmes and was one of the objectives of FAO when it was established in 1945. At the beginning of the 20th century, the disease occurred widely on three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe) and was responsible for the death of millions of cattle, buffalo and wildlife species, and for the loss of people's assets, livelihoods and ability to fend off famines.
2. The last outbreak of rinderpest was registered in 2001, and the last use of vaccine was recorded in 2006.
3. Substantial disease search and widespread serological surveillance throughout Asia, Africa and Middle East has been conducted without any evidence of virus circulation.
4. Based on this evidence, on 15 October 2010, the Director-General of FAO was in a position to declare the end of field operations of FAO's Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme, which had been established in 1994 in the context of EMPRES (Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases). Initiatives and decisions along the same lines were taken by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).
5. It is noted that the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE, at its 79th General Session, held from 22 to 27 May 2011, adopted Resolution 18/2011 recognizing the world as free from rinderpest virus circulation, and identifying technical follow-up steps of virus sequestration and safe management of remaining virus stocks. The Resolution that the Conference is invited to adopt reflects, with some adjustments to take into account the particular situation of FAO, the content of the Resolution adopted at the OIE.

II. Implementation of Rinderpest Eradication Campaigns and Programmes

6. Within a year from its establishment, FAO convened a first international meeting (1946) on animal health in London, United Kingdom, with the aim of exploring how the Organization could best assist in the harmonization of efforts to contain high impact livestock diseases, in particular those that were transboundary in nature. Rinderpest was at the top of the list and ever since then has continued to be a central element of the activities and programmes of the Organization.
7. Major campaigns in Asia throughout the 1950s and 1960s and in Africa, from 1960 through 1976, brought the disease largely under control. However, because of weaknesses in operational and structural follow-up, rinderpest resurged and spread widely in sub-Saharan Africa, and campaigns had to be renewed from 1986 onwards¹. In the early 1990s, the number of countries claiming freedom from rinderpest increased, as a result of concerted regional and international efforts.
8. FAO convened technical meetings at headquarters and in the field, in partnership with other institutions and its members, to discuss the development of more effective rinderpest vaccines, formulate strategies and guide countries in disease prevention, detection and control with the ultimate goal of eradication. It was recognised that regional coordination of campaigns against rinderpest were an essential approach to sustainable control of the disease, as isolated national actions brought only temporary relief.
9. The FAO Council at its 83rd Session, in June 1983,² endorsed a recommendation of the Committee on Agriculture regarding the need to formulate and implement national and international strategies of action for animal health, including rinderpest. Particular concern was expressed on the resurgence of this disease in Africa, Near East and Asia. The Council also requested FAO to provide

¹ CL 85/REP

² CL 83/REP, paragraphs 98-106; CL 84/REP, paragraphs 65-70.

assistance to African countries to control the disease and to mobilize support for the newly proposed Pan African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC) through the World Organisation for Animal Health, the Organization of African Unity and the European Economic Community.

10. PARC was followed by the establishment of the South Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (SAREC), the West Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (WAREC), the programme for the Pan-African Control of Epizootics (PACE) and the Somali Ecosystem Rinderpest Eradication Coordination Unit (SERECU), among a number of other initiatives. At its 107th session, in November 1994, the Council noted the ongoing activities to strengthen FAO support to global rinderpest eradication and expressed its appreciation of the emergency assistance provided to several countries in Africa linked to risks of serious epidemics of rinderpest.³

11. The Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) was established in 1994 as a global coordinating and partnership arrangement. GREP, as part of EMPRES (Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases), introduced a framework for the progressive, sequenced and time-bound eradication of rinderpest worldwide.⁴ GREP considered the year 2010 as the projected deadline for rinderpest eradication.

12. The FAO-IAEA Joint Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture has been instrumental in introducing and expanding diagnostic capabilities in developing countries, with initial emphasis on rinderpest diagnosis and on Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) as the appropriate technology. The range of diagnostic technology has also expanded, especially into Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) techniques for detection and characterisation of pathogens. The Joint Division activities have been closely coordinated with the programme's support so that the introduction of laboratory diagnostic capability has been directly linked to addressing disease control needs.⁵

13. GREP's objectives were achieved in 2010 as foreseen in 1994. With the cessation of its direct field operations, programme attention now would need to be redirected to maintain worldwide freedom from rinderpest, through safe custodianship and destruction of remaining stocks of vaccines or virus samples that may be held at research or diagnostic facilities. Actions are likewise required to develop a post-eradication strategy to identify policy and technical follow-up steps of virus sequestration and safe management of remaining virus stocks, so as to consolidate success of eradication. It is also essential to draw lessons from the successful rinderpest eradication process in order to address other high impact transboundary animal diseases more effectively.

III. Establishment of the Joint FAO/OIE Committee on Global Rinderpest Eradication

14. An independent review process was required to unequivocally establish that rinderpest eradication had been achieved, in a manner akin to the process adopted to declare smallpox eradication by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1980. FAO and OIE agreed to establish the Joint Committee for the Global Declaration of Rinderpest Eradication in June 2009. The main function of the Joint FAO/OIE Committee was to provide advice on the evidence available to the Directors-General of FAO and OIE, and review and monitor the process of declaring the eradication of rinderpest.

15. The Joint FAO/OIE Committee concluded that:

- a) rinderpest as a freely circulating viral disease had been eliminated from the world; and,
- b) the presence of virulent or attenuated rinderpest virus in laboratories constituted a potential threat to the global disease status.

³ CL 107, paragraphs 105 and 106.

⁴ CL 106, paragraphs 22, 26 and 41.1.b.

⁵ C 2001/INF/23 Evaluation Report on EMPRES, paragraph 24.

16. The Joint FAO/OIE Committee drafted recommendations and advised that a resolution be prepared for adoption by FAO's and OIE's respective supreme governing bodies. In addition, the Joint FAO/OIE Committee formulated guidelines for rinderpest virus sequestration or safe custodianship.

17. The World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE, held from 22 to 27 May 2011, adopted a Declaration on Global Freedom from Rinderpest and on the Implementation of Follow-up Measures to Maintain World Freedom from Rinderpest. The Declaration to be adopted by the Conference is set out in document C 2011/LIM/12.