South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

7th FAO/IIE Regional Steering Committee Meeting on GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific back to back with 4th Meeting of the HPED Steering Committee

16-18 July 2013
Relevant SAARC OBJECTIVES

- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
- To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries; among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and
- To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.
ARD Division:- HPED and TADs

- Relevant Sectoral mechanism is the Agri/Food Ministers Meeting. Technical Committee on Agriculture regularly meets and deliberates on all technical issues related to Agriculture and Food Security. Senior Officers Meeting (Secretary Level) meeting is also held, generally back-to-back with Agri Ministerial.

- SAARC has been arranging CVO’s meeting since 2008 and till date three such meetings have been held. This forum has emerged as an effective platform for discussing policy and technical issues pertaining to livestock development, animal health and public health hazards originating from animal sources for taking coordinated regional approach for improving food security and protecting public health.
Since inception Food Security remains one of the most important areas of cooperation of the Association. SAARC Leaders have demonstrated their commitment towards ensuring Food Security by adopting a number of important policy documents e.g. Agri Vision 2020, Colombo Statement on Food Security (Colombo Summit, 2008).
Given such high level political commitment on Food Security and health, addressing issues related to TADs/HPED become extremely important because of its impact on Food Security and public health.

Not surprisingly, therefore, SAARC Leaders have adopted the GF-TAD Framework back in 2008.

Separate MOUs signed between SAARC and FAO and WHO in 2010 has paved the way for launching the EU funded HPED project with establishment of regional coordination mechanisms.
The Regional Support Unit (RSU) and Regional Epidemiology Centre (REC) have been established and made fully functional with recruitment of required manpower and provisions of logistics.

Information sharing mechanisms have been established in the form of a website of the project which is regularly updated to share disease alerts in the region and other relevant material.
Publication of a bi-monthly information bulletin and a South Asia weekly Animal Diseases E-information bulletin is a regular feature.

The project activities are also being hosted on social media like Facebook and LinkedIn for wider circulation and impact.

Establishment and strengthening of **epidemiology networks (EpiNet)** has been initiated and steps have been taken to enhance capacities of member states in the field of epidemiology by organizing trainings.
Risk analysis training for trainers and training on risk based surveillance in livestock value chains have been conducted to direct the surveillance efforts to have more meaningful outcomes and to make policy decisions on science based evidences.

Consultative workshops have been organized to develop roads maps for progressive control of Foot and Mouth Disease and peste des petits ruminants (PPR) for the region.

SAARC Regional Leading Diagnostic Laboratories (RLDLs) have been established for priority diseases and supported with chemicals, reagents and equipments and hands on training given on major transboundary and high impact animal diseases.
HPED Project – Activities

- Proficiency testing of the national laboratories has been initiated in collaboration with the RLDLs and Australian Animal Health Laboratory.

- Two annual meetings (2012 and 2013) of the Laboratory Directors of RLDLs and National Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories were held to strengthen the lab-networks (LabNet) in the region.

- Second round of meeting to assess the progressive control pathway for FMD, PPR and Regional Epidemiology Network and Field Epidemiology Training for Veterinarians are planned.
Meeting of Policy and technical persons of the avian influenza affected countries in the Indo-Gangetic and Brahmaputra basin are on the cards.

The project is actively engaged technically and financially for successful holding of advocacy meeting on elimination of human rabies.
ADB has indicated processing of Technical Assistance Proposal entitled ‘SAARC Food Security through Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases’.

A regional project to enhance efforts on elimination of Human Rabies will be placed for SAARC Development Fund.
SAARC is keen to remain engaged even more robustly with FAO, OIE and WHO in implementation of the HPED project.

SAARC would like to see sustainability of the project is ensured and also institutionalizing of the resources and activities has taken place.

SAARC would like to see the project to continue for some more time to consolidate the gains achieved. SAARC, gradually needs to internalize the regional mechanism which has been acting to address TADs related issues.
SAARC is deeply committed to maintain its relations with FAO and WHO through this project and also looks forward to:

- implement other priority SAARC Food Security projects in partnership with FAO.
- Implement SAARC Health Policies and Regional Strategy on Communicable Diseases in Partnership with WHO
Thank you