



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

ORGANIZACION
DE LAS NACIONES
UNIDAS PARA
LA AGRICULTURA
Y LA ALIMENTACION

منظمة
الغذية
والزراعة
للأمم
المتحدة

OPENING STATEMENT

BY

Mr. Edouard K. Tapsoba
Deputy Representative for Africa and Sub –Regional Coordinator for
West Africa

ON BEHALF OF

Mr. Oloche A. Edache
Assistant Director-General/
Regional Representative for Africa

FOR

**JOINT FAO GREP/AU-IBAR WORKSHOP
ON ACCREDITATION OF RINDERPEST FREEDOM IN AFRICA**

MIKLIN HOTEL, ACCRA, GHANA, 29 NOVEMBER 2006

Chairperson,

**Director of Veterinary Services of Ghana representing the Honourable
Minister of Food and Agriculture,**

Representatives of OIE AND IBAR,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Assistant Director-General of FAO's Regional Representation for Africa, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Ghana and to this workshop which is kindly hosted by the Government of Ghana. Ghana has fortunately been free from rinderpest since 1988 and is making good progress in achieving OIE accreditation of rinderpest freedom. It is therefore an appropriate country in which to hold a meeting designed to help other African countries achieve freedom accreditation – a most important issue for the final stages of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme.

The widespread occurrence of rinderpest after the Second World War was in fact one of the major stimuli for the founding of FAO as a specialised agency of the United Nations. It was widely understood that so severe was the impact of rinderpest on food security by preventing the preparation of fields and paddies for crop production and killing livestock that agricultural development would not be possible while the disease remained uncontrolled.

In the case of Africa cattle plague or rinderpest has continuously damaged the lives of many millions of farmers since its introduction into eastern Africa at the end of the 19th Century. The resulting sub-Saharan panzootic spread south to the Cape of South Africa and west to the Atlantic coast devastating livestock-based agriculture and wildlife populations. Subsequently the enzootic situation which prevailed was interrupted repeatedly by resurgences of infection causing renewed panzootics. The last of these erupted from residual reservoirs of infection in Mauritania/Mali and the Horn of Africa in the early 1980s. This occurred after the end of the first internationally-coordinated programme of rinderpest which was named Joint Project 15. FAO poured millions of dollars of its own money into emergency projects to bring the disease under control, a process that was continued by the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign funded primarily by the European Commission and implemented by OAU's Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources. West Africa was cleared of infection by 1988 leaving reservoirs of infection only in eastern Africa. PARC was followed by another IBAR coordinated effort titled the Pan-African Control of Epizootics programme which again, at least in part, targeted rinderpest eradication. FAO has worked closely with IBAR on rinderpest eradication often in a complementary manner by addressing particularly difficult areas such as Southern Sudan and by tackling rinderpest emergencies. As a result we have reached a situation in 2006 where there is growing confidence that even the last reservoir of rinderpest in the

Somali Ecosystem might have been eliminated. The virus has not been seen since 2001 in Kenya, a situation mirroring that of the rest of the world which is reliably free from rinderpest.

The process by which GREP demonstrates freedom from rinderpest is through the accreditation process operated by OIE and called the OIE Pathway which is defined in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code. This is a rather arduous three stage process in which countries which have declared themselves provisionally free from rinderpest progress through the stage of freedom from rinderpest disease to a stage of freedom from infection. Assisting countries in this process is now the prime focus of FAO's GREP working in close collaboration with OIE and building on the strength of both organisations. Good progress has been made in recent years with many countries assisted by IBAR progressing well along the OIE Pathway. Just this last week another seven African countries have achieved recognition of freedom from rinderpest infection and three more freedom from rinderpest disease. I am very happy to be informed that if approved by the OIE International Committee Ghana is one of the infection free countries.

FAO, OIE and IBAR have convened this meeting to work with a number of countries which for one reason or another has made little progress towards accreditation of rinderpest freedom. It is our aim to find ways to help them to proceed so that by 2010 we can proclaim that rinderpest has been eradicated.

I wish you a pleasant and constructive meeting with a useful outcome.