

## *OIE animal welfare standards - Rationale and spaces for animal welfare organisation engagement*

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Reaffirming that animal health is a key component of animal welfare and with the mandate granted by its Member Countries, the OIE has taken a global leadership role in setting global animal welfare standards and today the OIE animal welfare standards cover five main areas: farm animal production systems, transport of animals, humane slaughter and killing of animals, laboratory animals and the control of stray dog populations. Based on science, these standards have been developed by groups of international experts and supported by the OIE *Animal Welfare Working Group*. These groups provide a forum for interested industry and NGO sectors to sit ‘around the table’ with representatives of the scientific community, academia and the veterinary services. All OIE standards are endorsed by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, currently representing 178 Member Countries, after an extensive consultation process involving the support of OIE specialised commissions.

In its commitment to the welfare of animals, the OIE supports, in principle, the *Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare* (UDAW) proposed by the *World Society for the Protection of Animals* (WSPA) which recognises the OIE as the established *international animal welfare standard-setting body*. This statement supports the idea of avoiding duplication of international standards as well as preventing excessive proliferation of *private or industry standards* which may not be science-based. Likewise, under their cooperation agreement signed in 2011, the OIE welcomes the recent initiative of the *International Standardisation Organization* (ISO) to develop technical specifications on animal welfare based on existing OIE standards.

Acknowledging the need to support the Veterinary Services in their efforts to implement the OIE international standards, the OIE has set different capacity building activities including conferences and workshops conducted at global, regional and sometimes national levels, with the support of OIE Collaborating Centres. The most important global capacity building initiative of the OIE is the PVS Pathway for the evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services, for compliance with the quality standards set out in the OIE Codes. This standardised evaluation tool for Veterinary Services worldwide has since 2010 included ‘animal welfare’ as a ‘*critical competency*’ of Veterinary Services. A (small) sample of PVS reports from Africa teaches us that most countries in Africa apply some of the OIE standards, primarily to meet export requirements.

The OIE has also develop several regional animal welfare strategies (RAWS), where the veterinary authorities, the civil society, the industry, NGOs and other relevant regional stakeholders are brought together to identify and address the gaps between the situation in the region and the level of compliance with OIE standards, recognising the need to work together to ensure a sustainable improvement of the welfare of animals. Animal welfare organisations can and should engage **national authorities** in this process through various channels, the most important one being through the national animal welfare focal point and the national OIE Delegate, who represent the core initiators of work on standards on animal welfare, but there are others : the OIE *Working Group on Animal Welfare*, which includes representatives of international or regional/specialised animal welfare organisations, OIE international conferences on animal welfare, the training of OIE animal welfare focal points, the work of the OIE international Collaborating Centres dealing with animal welfare and the increasing number of regional animal welfare strategies and action plans developed by OIE regional offices, in collaboration with relevant regional stakeholders.

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Dr Patrick X. Bastiaensen was born in Kinshasa, Congo (° 1965). A Belgian national, he graduated in 1991 with a *Doctor of Veterinary Medicine* degree (DVM) from the University of Ghent, in Belgium. After a short stint working as a research assistant in tropical helminthology at the University from which he graduated, he left for the southern hemisphere, working on long term contracts for a variety of national, regional and international organisations, amongst which the Belgian, French and German Development Cooperation, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN. He was consecutively based in Suriname, Togo, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mali, Botswana and now Kenya, and gradually moved away from tropical parasitology to become an all-round animal epidemiologist, confirmed by the corresponding certificate, obtained in 2006 from the Alfort School of Veterinary Medicine in Paris. He has worked for the OIE since 2007 when he joined the newly established Gaborone office in Botswana, after a successful assignment working for the final programme towards eradication of rinderpest, the PACE programme, coordinated by AU-IBAR. Over time he has worked in more than 30 countries on all continents. He is the principal author of 12 peer-reviewed scientific articles and co-authored another 9, many of which deal with tsetse and trypanosomiasis control, as well as rinderpest. Dr. Bastiaensen is married with two children (and one grandchild) and is based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Dr. Mariela H. Varas was born in Les Lilas, France (° 1978). In 2005, she graduated with a *Doctor of Veterinary Medicine* degree (DVM) from the University of Chile. Her work with the OIE's Regional Coordination Unit for the South East Asia Foot and Mouth Disease Campaign (RCU-SEAFMD) led her to obtain the degree of *Master of Science* (MSc) in Epidemiological surveillance for human and animal diseases, from the Alfort School of Veterinary Medicine in Paris (ENVA) in 2007. She first joined the OIE in 2008, as a project officer of the Animal Health Information Department, and was then appointed as the OIE animal welfare officer in 2010, position that she fulfilled until August 2013. Today, Dr Varas is married and is based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Dr Neo J. Mapitse is a Botswana national and the OIE Sub Regional Representative for Southern Africa. He qualified and was bestowed a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVMS) degree from the University of Glasgow in 1996. Neo did his MSc in Wild Animal Health with the University of London in 1998 following his interest in dynamics of the wildlife - livestock interface. He is a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Dr Mapitse joined the OIE in 2010 as a deputy sub regional representative after his service with Botswana Government as a veterinarian. His responsibilities as a state veterinarian included wildlife diseases and translocations, imports-exports, trade negotiations focusing on sanitary measures and developing linkages between animal, public health and wildlife conservation. Dr Mapitse has publications on wildlife diseases, trade and animal health policy and has an interest in animal health policy improvement. Dr. Mapitse is married with two children, based in Gaborone, Botswana and has an affection for the outdoors.

Dr Walter N. Masiga was born in western Kenya (° 1940). In 1967, he graduated with a *Bachelor of Veterinary Science* degree (B.V.Sc.) from the then University of East Africa and in 1969, he obtained an academic *Diploma in Bacteriology* (Dip.Bact.) from the University of London's School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to study bacteriology, receiving an In 1973 he was awarded the Ph.D degree in bacteriology and immunology from the University of Nairobi. In 1993, he was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree (*honoris causa*) from the Boston based Tufts University in the USA. After a successful career working for the *East African Veterinary Research Organization* (EAVRO) and later for KARI as the Director and Chief Scientist of the Muguga veterinary research laboratories, he became the Director of the African Union's technical agency, the *Inter-african Bureau for Animal Resources* (AU-IBAR) in 1985, from which he retired in 2000. He is widely credited for having brought rinderpest to extinction on the African continent and the diagnostic and control tools for *Contagious Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia* and *Contagious Caprine Pleuro-Pneumonia*. He is currently the Representative for East and the Horn of Africa of the *World Organisation for Animal Health* (OIE), based in Upper Hill, Nairobi. He is the principal author of more than 40 peer-reviewed scientific articles and co-authored another 25, many of which deal with CBPP and CCPP.

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