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ONE HEALTH AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

CONCEPT NOTE

1. The Countries and the international community in general have been recently stricken by different highly relevant and complex health events. Hence, the threats of Ebola epidemics and pandemic influenza have challenged prevention systems and contingency plans. Control and prevention of antimicrobial resistance and foodborne diseases urge to establish effective surveillance systems and to seek strategies for the production of safe food – from the farm to the table. On the other hand, we should be aware of the impact of climatic phenomena like El Niño for spreading diseases. The difficulties presented by the Zika virus due to the complex control of its vectors are an example of this. All these events show a relationship between human population, animal population and the environment, and they cannot be properly analyzed or solved in isolation, only through integrating strategies.
2. The Constitution of the World Health Organization defines health as the “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. This definition relates human health with the environment, linking human and animal health in such a way that their convergence entails benefits and risks for both. One manifestation of this relationship is the occurrence, presence and spread of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.
3. Since the 50’s, WHO and PAHO are promoting an intersectoral approach for the protection and promotion of human and animal health through technical cooperation in Veterinary Public Health, considered as **“the sum of all contributions to the physical, mental and social well-being of humans through an understanding and application of veterinary science”** (WHO, 1999).
4. During the conference convened by the Wildlife Conservation Society (New York, 2004), called “One World One Health: Building Interdisciplinary Bridges to Health in a Globalized World” several recommendations were made for the establishment of a holistic approach to prevent epidemic and zoonotic diseases, maintaining the integrity of ecosystems and the benefit of human beings and their companion animals and the foundational biodiversity that supports us all. The conference emphasized that **“no discipline or sector of society has enough knowledge and resources to prevent the emergence or resurgence of diseases in a globalized world”**.
5. The concept of **One Health** conceived as the **governance of intersectoral, inter-programmatic and inter-disciplinary efforts, necessary to promote and protect the health status of people, animals and the environment, goes beyond zoonotic diseases**, including all pathologies with an impact on public health and food security.

6. Within this context, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with the collaboration of the World Bank and the United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSIC), have published in 2008 a joint document called **“Strategic framework for reducing the risks of infectious diseases at the animal-human-ecosystems interface: Contributing to One World, One Health”** .
7. The above underlines the need of adopting a multi-disciplinary, multi-national and multisectoral approach; the integration of technical, social, political and regulatory aspects; and the establishment of meaningful partnerships between all the sectors, including interests related to wildlife and ecosystems, public and veterinary health communities, and advanced research institutions.
8. In spite of the significant presence of foodborne and zoonotic diseases in the region of the Americas, as well as environmental health issues affecting animal and human health, intersectoral collaborations remains limited, both at technical and political level. Nevertheless, some countries already have coordination instances in order to address – jointly and with collective efforts – issues affecting public health and food security that either generate and disseminate zoonoses and chemical threats, or limit the timeliness and effective applications of international regulatory standards approved by the countries.
9. The World Commission on Environment and Development report **“Our Common Future”**, usually known as the **“Brundtland Report”**, defined the concept of Sustainable Development as **“the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”**. This is a “tridimensional” interpretation since it brings together the three cornerstones of Sustainable Development, namely, the essential goals: the *“economic goal”*, the *“social goal”*, and the *“environmental goal”*, in reference to avoid degradation of the environment that will be inherited by future generations.
10. The United Nations, through the Millennium Declaration, agreed on achieving eight global goals which, if attained, would allow to advance, during the 2000-2015 period, toward the development of the countries and their populations. An analysis of these goals made by the CEPAL¹ indicates that, although not all the targets set have been achieved, substantial advances were made, particularly regarding the targets of reducing poverty and hunger, and that 93% of boys and girls have completed a full course of primary schooling (the goal was 100%), even though this is considered insufficient for the populations to obtain incomes that allow them to escape poverty, in addition to the gender inequality that still persists in detriment of women regarding primary and secondary education.
11. Regarding public health goals, although mortality in children under 5 years old could be reduced by two thirds, the 75% decline in maternal mortality was not attained; adolescent fertility rates remain significantly high, only declining from 83 to 63 annual births per 1000 adolescents aged 15-19 years old; the reduction of AIDS-related deaths was not satisfactory either, although a reduction was observed in the incidence of malaria, a disease that is still affecting more than 430,000 people every year in the Region.
12. In the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, the countries renewed their commitment in support of sustainable development and the promotion of a sustainable economic, social and environmental future for the planet and present and future generations.
13. The outcome document of the Conference **“The Future we Want”**² points out that, although progress has been made during the past two decades on the Sustainable Goals expectations, it has been unequal or

¹ CEPAL: *Latin America and the Caribbean: looking ahead after the Millennium Development Goals: Regional monitoring report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2015*. September 2015.

² *The Future we Want: Final document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*. Rio +20. June 2012.

insufficient, which leads us to acknowledge “the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages”.

14. Likewise, it acknowledges that people are at the centre of sustainable development, it underlines the need to “regularly review the Earth’s changing environment and its impact on human well-being”, it highlights the role of legislative and governmental bodies at all levels, as well as the role of the civil society, and the vital role of women through their leadership, as well as that of the private sector. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of strengthening the institutional framework, which should integrate the three dimensions or cornerstones of sustainable development, i.e., economic, social and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner, that governance at the local, subnational, national, regional, and global levels should be effective and represent the voices and interests of all, as well as the role of municipal governments.
15. The major issue of the document “The Future We Want” is the effective integration of the three core foundations of development in order to prevent social policy from being subordinated to economic development and that environmental sustainability is not subject to production and consumption patterns.
16. The Region of Latin America and the Caribbean, although considered a middle-income region, has the most inequitable income distribution in the world, which is observed in the substantial differences of individuals or groups to have access to goods and services. Likewise, almost 80% of its population is predominantly urban – the highest percentage in the world –, and it is made up of highly heterogeneous countries with different levels of social, economic and productive development. Therefore, homogeneous goals that do not consider regional heterogeneity between and within the countries may limit national and subnational adoption of the development agenda.
17. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development broadens the Goals and Targets of the Millennium Development Goals by incorporating new goals related to economic, productive, social and environmental changes, comprising a total of 17 goals and 169 targets.
18. These goals are aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger, ensuring a healthy life, guaranteeing inclusive, equitable and quality education as well as the availability of water and the access to affordable energy, promoting economic development and reducing inequalities within and between the countries, ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, and adopting measures to combat climate change, conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, and protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.
19. The principles supporting the One Health approach have a direct or indirect impact on the main cornerstones of Sustainable Development, as well as on most, if not all, of its 17 goals. PAHO, along with the countries, should continue working to achieve these key goals for the region through the One Health approach.
20. As an example, the One Health concept is essential to achieve SDG2 “**end hunger and achieve food security**”. This implies, among other things, to continue fighting to control those diseases that drastically reduce livestock production parameters, such as foot-and-mouth disease, whose eradication, led by PANAFTOSA-VPH/PAHO-WHO, is increasingly near, since no outbreaks have been reported for more than three years and almost 95% of the territory is recognized as free from disease. Programs for foot-and-mouth disease eradication and control have promoted the structuring of animal healthcare services. The capacities built to combat foot-and-mouth disease (e.g.: field units, diagnostic laboratory networks, information and epidemiological surveillance system, etc.), as well as the integration of producers into health programs and community mobilization, are used by veterinary public health to expand its healthcare and population coverage. The structure of foot-and-mouth disease care has thereby also been devoted to zoonoses control programs of economic impact, and to food inspection, and it is currently mobilizing to address the new challenge of prudent use of antimicrobial agents. It should be remembered that agricultural productive chains have a strategic importance for the countries by ensuring nutritional and food security,

favoring employment creation, and maintaining the link of part of the population with the rural area thus avoiding their migration to urban areas.

21. In the case of the SDG3 “**Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages**”, 13 targets were established, most of them benefiting from the intersectoral approach of One Health. Being health a prior condition, an outcome and an indicator of the three dimensions of sustainable development, SDGs will only be met when the prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases is reduced and populations have a physical, mental and social well-being.
22. The aforesaid is totally in line with the “**Health in all policies**”³ approach, a process that requires, among others, creating solid partnerships that recognize mutual interests and share targets, integrating responsibilities in strategies, goals and targets, and establishing feedback mechanisms in order to monitor the progress and difficulties at the highest governmental levels.
23. At the request of the Ministers of Health of the Region, PAHO has elaborated a document⁴ to facilitate comparing and analyzing the relationship between the SDG 3 and the targets and outcomes of PAHO Strategic Plan for the 2014-2019⁵ five-year period . Similar documents are being prepared regarding other SDGs, which make an essential contribution to health-related outcomes.
24. Due to the aforesaid, RIMSA 17 seeks to enable the exchange of political, technical, and collaboration and cooperation experiences about the core topics of the Agenda “ONE HEALTH and THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS”. Besides, it is expected that the health and agricultural sectors of the countries, key players of One Health and responsible of the practical implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals linked to these sectors, will provide strategic guidelines for international technical cooperation. In recent years, global public health security has been threatened by zoonotic disease emergence as exemplified by outbreaks of H5N1 and H1N1 influenza viruses, SARS, and most recently the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), Ebola and Zika viruses. While emerging zoonoses are often a greater concern to decision-makers and development partners, endemic zoonoses have a greater societal impact on neglected populations than emerging diseases.

³ Pan American Health Organization. Plan of action on Health in all policies. Washington, D.C., USA: PAHO; 2015. (accessed on June 9, 2016). Available at: http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=26798

⁴ *Preparing the Region of the Americas to Achieve the Development Sustainable Goal on Health*. Washington, D.C., USA: OPS, 2015. (accessed June 9 2016). Available at: http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=31629&Itemid=270&lang=es

⁵ Pan American Health Organization. 2014-2019 *Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization* [Internet]. 52.º PAHO Directing Council, 65th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas, September 30-October 4, 2013; Washington, D.C., USA. Washington, D.C., USA: PAHO; 2013 (Official Document 345) [accessed June 9, 2016]. Available at: <http://iris.paho.org/xmllui/bitstream/handle/123456789/4034/OD345-s.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>