

FAO Statement No.2 (Agenda Item 15.1 Strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response and resilience) - SEVENTY-SIXTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY¹

21–30 May 2023

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

1. It is a pleasure to address the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly.
2. As part of our collaboration with the WHO and the other Quadripartite Organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations promotes a **One Health approach**, among other areas, to the prevention, control and management of infectious diseases with pandemic potential at the animal source, including those related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
3. Most human pandemic-causing pathogens have animal origin, and several drivers underpin the emergence and spillover of pandemic threats including environmental degradation, encroachment on wildlife habitat, increased interactions between humans and animals, consumption of wild-sourced food, climate change and others.
4. Pandemic **prevention** is the first and most critical step to avert the public health and socio-economic impacts of pandemics. To be effective, prevention requires strong coordination and collaboration across sectors.
5. The **One Health approach** is inherently tied to prevention and expands to the preparedness and response on pandemics. One Health breaks the silos between sectors and disciplines and ensures whole of government and whole of society engagement. The WHO international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (WHO CA+) **would not be complete without a solid and thorough One Health approach being incorporated as a main pillar and foundation of the Treaty.**
6. Such an approach would not alter the scope of mechanisms under this instrument, but it would strengthen them by facilitating the appropriate connections between health of humans, animals and the environment in the prevention, preparedness, and response to human pandemics.
7. A preventive approach would also pay attention to **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**, which as a silent pandemic is estimated to cause 700,000 deaths a year. AMR demands a coordinated One Health response that involves appropriate stewardship for antimicrobials in the human and animal sectors, and consideration of the role of the environment as a reservoir for AMR.
8. As we have seen with COVID-19, we live in an era of interconnectedness. International instruments such as the Sustainable Development Goals remind us of the importance to

¹ Theme: WHO at 75: Saving lives, driving health for all

facilitate coordination and collaboration across sectors and disciplines. In this context not having a strong One Health foundation for the Pandemic Accord could be seen as a missed opportunity.

9. Thank you.