



**Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul**

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 18-23 MAY, 2026

Agenda Item: N	Reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals of mammalian species in traditional food markets – infection prevention and control (decision WHA75(23) (2022))
Documents	A79/26 and A79/26 Add.1
Requested action	Take note of the report
Time limit	3 minute
Commission	B

Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Gambia aligned with statement delivered by the **Central Africa Republic** on Behalf of WHO African Region.

Chair

Recent global health events have underscored the impact of the sale of live wild mammalian animals in traditional food markets on the emergence and transmission of zoonotic diseases, with profound implications for global health security. The Gambia aligns itself with global efforts to reduce the public health risks associated with this practice.

Traditional markets are essential sources of food security and livelihoods for many communities. However, where live wild mammals are sold, there is an increased risk of cross-species transmission of pathogens. While such markets are not a prominent feature in The Gambia, we acknowledge that localized and informal practices do exist. Addressing this challenge requires a balanced approach that protects public health while taking socio-economic realities into account. As such, we are adopting a proactive, risk-based approach grounded in the One Health framework and appropriate infection prevention and control measures.

The Gambia is strengthening its regulatory frameworks to ensure the safe handling, transportation, and sale of animals, alongside the enforcement of hygiene and sanitation standards in markets, as enshrined in the Food Safety Act 2011 and the Animal Health Act 2010.

We therefore call for increased investment in surveillance and laboratory systems, workforce development, infection prevention and control, and risk communication strategies to empower communities and market stakeholders with the knowledge needed to reduce transmission risks. Equally important is international collaboration, including data sharing and technical support, particularly for low- and middle-income countries.

In conclusion, reducing the risks associated with live wild animal markets is a shared global responsibility. Through coordinated action, robust infection prevention and control measures, and a strong commitment to the One Health approach, we can better prevent future outbreaks and protect the health of our populations.

The Gambia takes note of the report

Thank you.