

ONE HEALTH AND UGANDA

WHY USE A ONE HEALTH APPROACH?

Zoonotic diseases (diseases that can be spread between animals and humans) pose an increasing challenge. Over the past 30 years, new infectious agents and diseases affecting humans have emerged at a rate of more than one per year. Most of these outbreaks have been zoonotic diseases.¹ Unfortunately, public health systems have limited capacity for timely detection and response to zoonotic diseases.

The “One Health” approach is a proactive, integrated approach that calls for multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary engagement across the human, animal (including wildlife), and environmental health sectors to better prevent, detect, and respond to emerging pandemic threats.

The One Health approach reflects international best practice, as reflected in a Tripartite Concept note endorsed by the World Health Organization, the World Animal Health Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization. The One Health approach, as a multi-sectoral process, can contribute to meeting

the requirements of the WHO International Health Regulations and the Global Health Security Agenda.

WHY DOES UGANDA NEED ONE HEALTH?

Uganda is one of the hotspots for emerging and re-emerging pandemic threats in the region. Over the last decade, the country has experienced outbreaks of Ebola virus disease, Marburg hemorrhagic fever, Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever, and yellow fever among other acute public health events. All these originated from animals, primarily wild animals.

Although sectors have been collaborating to respond to disease outbreaks, the collaboration has been ad hoc, and One Health is not institutionalized as a formal multi-sectoral coordination approach to prevention, detection and response to zoonotic disease threats in the country.

HOW WILL UGANDA IMPLEMENT ONE HEALTH?

Drawing on lessons learned from recent major health crises such as avian influenza and Ebola virus outbreaks, the Government of Uganda joined the

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR CONTROLLING ZOOONOTIC DISEASES IS COMPELLING. A 2012 WORLD BANK STUDY ON THE ONE HEALTH APPROACH FOUND THE FOLLOWING:²

US\$80bn

Economic losses from six major outbreaks of fatal zoonotic diseases from 1997 to 2009 amounted to at least US\$80 billion.

US\$6.7bn

If these outbreaks had been prevented, the benefits of the avoided losses would have averaged \$6.7 billion per year.

If any of the outbreaks had developed into a pandemic, the economic losses would have been much higher, and accompanied by social disruptions and a potentially staggering human toll.

¹ Institute of Medicine (US) Forum on Microbial Threats, 2009. *Microbial Evolution and Co-Adaptation: A Tribute to the Life and Scientific Legacies of Joshua Lederberg*. Workshop Summary, Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

² World Bank, 2012. *People, Pathogens and Our Planet Vol. 2: The Economics of One Health*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

Global Health Security Agenda, reflecting high-level political support and participation for One Health. Four Government of Uganda sectors (the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Ministry of Water and Environment) jointly signed a framework on One Health collaboration to prevent and control zoonotic diseases and other events requiring a multi-sectorial approach.

The One Health Framework outlines how the four sectors, as well as One Health stakeholders, will foster and maintain active collaboration to prevent, detect and respond to health threats.

As part of the framework, the sectors developed a memorandum of understanding that outlines their roles, responsibilities, and obligations under the One Health collaboration.

One Health will be institutionalized through the establishment of a Zoonotic Disease Coordination Office (ZDCO) —housed in one of the sectors and a One Health Technical Working Group co-chaired by the Directors from the respective sectors on a rotational basis.

To ensure sustainability, the platform will be legally anchored within a government institution such as the National Institute for Public Health, which is being established.

FOCUS AREAS

To guide effective focused collaboration and coordination, the newly established platform will develop a five year One Health strategic plan. Key potential focus areas in the strategic plan will include the following:

1 Policy advocacy and communications

Increase buy-in and support for One Health by professionals, policy makers and the community.

2 Preparedness and response

Strengthen multi-sectoral preparedness planning and improve Uganda's ability to respond to zoonotic disease outbreak at all levels.

3 Training and research

Improve human, animal, and environmental health through evidence-based research and training.

4 Disease surveillance, prevention and control

Provide functional and high-quality integrated human and animal health systems at all levels to reduce the burden of zoonotic diseases.

5 Coordination

Build structures and systems that facilitate collaboration, harmonization of cross-sector activities, and synergies amongst One Health actors.