
16th INTER-AMERICAN MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE (RIMSA 16)

“Agriculture-Health-Environment: joining forces for the well-being of the peoples of the Americas”

Santiago, Chile, 26-27 July 2012

Consensus of Santiago of Chile

1. The Agriculture and Health Ministers and Official Delegations of the countries of the Americas participating in the 16th Inter-American Meeting at the Ministerial Level on Health and Agriculture (RIMSA 16), held in Santiago, Chile, July 26-27, 2012, analysed the opportunities and challenges of maintaining adequate, sustainable, nutritiously balanced quality food supplies for a continuously growing human population, in harmony with the environment. They recognized the importance and the complexity of the interactions that take place at the public health-animal health-environment interface.
2. RIMSA 16 kept in mind the principles embodied in “The Future We Want,” as agreed by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio + 20, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 20-22, 2012, which ratified the First Principle of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration issued twenty years earlier (1992), which emphasizes that human beings are the central concern of sustainable development; the considerations of the High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, held in New York, September 19-20, 2011; the World Summit on Food Security, held in Rome, November 16-18, 2009; and the Sixth Meeting of the Latin America and the Caribbean Without Hunger Initiative, held in Guyana, July 12-13, 2012, which reaffirmed the goal of eliminating hunger by 2025.
3. RIMSA 16 pointed out that the strategic actions to achieve food security should carefully consider issues related to energy security, climate change, and resource availability.
4. It also took note of the contributions and suggestions from the three technical events held just before RIMSA 16: the 12th Meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Food-and-Mouth-Disease in the Americas (COHEFA 12), the Sixth Meeting of the Pan-American Commission on Food Safety (COPAIA 6), and the Inter-Agency Forum “Toward Integrated Epidemiological Surveillance, including:”
 - a. global food production has responded quantitatively to worldwide demand by expanding the areas for crop and livestock production, and significantly increasing productivity, but not from the point of view of nutritional quality. Situations of inequality and inequity persist, affecting large segments of the population. About one billion people worldwide are undernourished, and a larger number suffer the consequences of excessive or unbalanced energy consumption. This constitutes a major risk factor for disabilities, illnesses, and death resulting from chronic malnutrition and non-communicable diseases.

- b. the food supply must meet the nutritional requirements of a growing population. In addition, non-food uses of agricultural raw materials, climatic change and the changes in consumption patterns will exert additional pressure on food prices. All these factors will affect food and nutritional security, and require strong public/private and multisectoral partnerships, with the active participation of consumers and civil society.
- c. in order to satisfy food requirements by 2050, global agricultural production must increase by 70 per cent, without considering the growing and competitive demand for other uses and products, such as biofuels. Such intensified productivity must be continuously monitored, so as to ensure that it is achieved without causing or increasing environmental degradation of land and water.
- d. food safety plays a decisive role in the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and is a critical factor in preventing antimicrobial resistance and foodborne diseases, which remain major public health concerns. International food trade, travel, and tourism contribute significantly to the social and economic development of most countries of the region but these are also factors that facilitate the occurrence and spread of public health events, nationally and internationally.
- e. food control systems are responsible for ensuring food safety and quality and for providing on-going, transparent information to consumers. There is increasing interest in the countries for promoting the strengthening of food control systems and for enhancing institutional capabilities to mitigate the impact of foodborne diseases and to prevent them from negatively affecting international trade.
- f. the expansion and intensification of crop and livestock production are also associated with increased risk of disease outbreaks and occupational health problems. Nearly two thirds of the known human pathogens are of animal origin and three out four emerging human diseases are zoonotic, about 70 per cent of which come from wild animal species. Animal influenzas are becoming a potential threat to poultry and swine production, and may cause pandemics with severe social and health impact that require continuous coordination and exchange of information between animal and human health surveillance systems.
- g. RIMSA 16 reiterates its concern over the so-called “neglected diseases,” including zoonoses such as rabies, plague, hydatidosis, leishmaniasis, and leptospirosis. Moreover, their risk and/or persistence raise a serious obstacle to health and to improving the quality of life of people living in poverty. Achieving their eradication or full control is a long-overdue task.
- h. there is a growing need to maintain and reinforce coordination between public health and animal health services for the prevention, early detection, control, and elimination of the risks that animal diseases pose to public health, whether by affecting the production of foods of animal origin, their trade, as in the case of foot-and-mouth disease, or by causing disease in humans.
- i. the implementation of these processes requires competent human resources trained in the provision of scientific evidence to support interventions in the prevention, control, and elimination of zoonoses, in the prevention of emerging infectious diseases, in food

safety for human consumption, prevention of foodborne diseases and antimicrobial resistance, and in occupational health of those people working on the production, processing and commercialization of food. Qualified human resources are also needed to ensure the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas and to enhance national capabilities for integrated epidemiological surveillance pertaining to both animal and human health.

5. In view of the preceding, RIMSA 16:

- a) endorses the resolutions adopted by COHEFA 12 regarding the need to reinforce actions aimed at the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease in the Americas by 2020, within the framework of the Hemispheric Plan for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA) as agreed by the countries;
- b) agrees with the COPAIA 6 recommendations on the adoption of multisectoral public policies that promote equity and strengthen food safety systems to ensure safe, healthy food, with an emphasis on vulnerable populations;
- c) highlights the conclusions of the Inter-Agency Forum “Toward Integrated Epidemiological Surveillance” and the sharing of experiences and possibilities for cooperation between countries as well as between the health, agricultural, and environmental sectors, for more efficient management of risks at the human-animal-environment interface, within the framework of the International Health Regulations and OIE norms. It further stresses the need to increase investment in research and technological innovation to address issues of regional interest;
- d) encourages the establishment of early warning and intersectoral coordination mechanisms within and between countries for the systematic analysis and sharing of epidemiological information and risk assessment and management. As experience shows, collaboration between the public health, animal health, and environmental sectors is possible and sustainable, and it requires effective multisectoral and multidisciplinary teams;
- e) urges the countries to endeavour to eliminate canine-transmitted human rabies in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- f) calls for greater joint efforts to foster the safe and healthy food production for the prevention, control, and management of non-communicable chronic diseases – which cause great socio-economic damage to the countries, using a multisectoral, inclusive approach, and establishing public-private partnerships;
- g) confirms its interest in and support for technical cooperation proposals aimed at strengthening national capacities for early warning and response systems for zoonoses, foodborne diseases, animal diseases, antimicrobial resistance and occupational health, urging that these proposal be based on improved inter-agency coordination and alignment;
- h) recognizes the need for and the impact of agricultural research on development and calls for a better use and sharing of the information and knowledge generated, and calls for greater public investment;

- i) expresses its appreciation to the Government of Chile for its hospitality, technical support, and financial contribution that made the successful implementation of these meetings possible;
- j) congratulates PAHO on its 110th anniversary and expresses its appreciation for the excellent organization and coordination of RIMSAs 16, held in conjunction with the Ministries of Agriculture and Health of Chile;
- k) recognizes and expresses its gratitude to Dr. Mirta Roses Periago for her leadership, dedication, and commitment during a decade of work as Director of PAHO/WHO and for her invaluable support to and participation in RIMSAs meetings.

Santiago, Chile, 27 July 2012.