



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Meeting Report

The Fifteenth Annual Regional Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases Meeting for Asia and the Pacific (AREM)

Virtual meeting
14, 24, and 31 May 2021

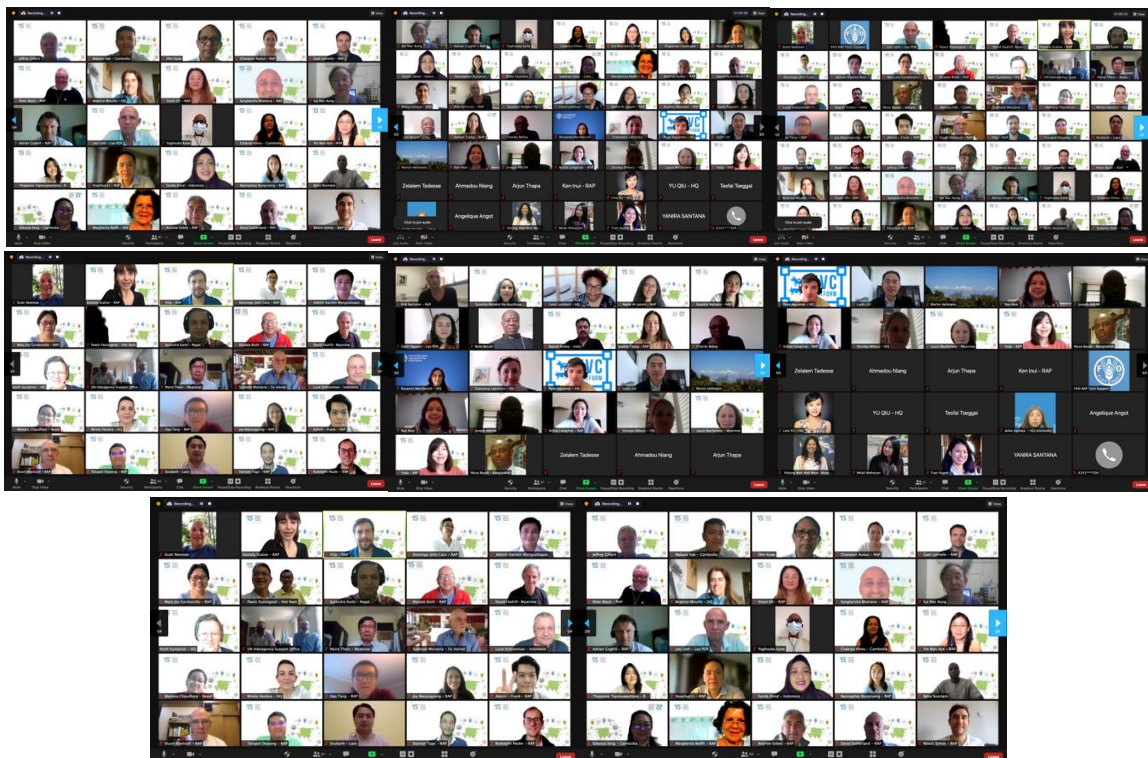


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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AMR	Antimicrobial resistance
AMU	Antimicrobial usage
ASF	African swine fever
EIDs	Emerging infectious diseases
EPT-2	Emerging Pandemic Threats 2
EZs	Endemic zoonoses
GF-TADs	Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
GHSP	Global Health Security Program
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NTE	Not-to-exceed
PCP-FMD	Progressive Control Pathway for Foot-and-Mouth Disease
PSE	Private sector engagement
TADs	Transboundary animal diseases
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VLC	Virtual Learning Centre

Background

The FAO Asia programme on highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was launched in early 2006. The First Annual Meeting of the Asia Regional Programme on HPAI meeting was held in January 2007 in Bangkok, which provided an important opportunity for the programme staff in the Region to meet as a group and develop a common understanding of the complex issues and challenges to be dealt with in the Region. Since then, the Annual Regional Meeting for the ECTAD Regional Programme in Asia and the Pacific (AREM) has been organized to focus on strengthening coordination of the ECTAD Regional Programme and improving the efficiency of its delivery amid the evolving situation. Each AREM has given an opportunity to ECTAD teams from the country, regional and headquarters levels to review ongoing activities and re-evaluate ECTAD's future direction taking into account the changes likely to take place in the next few years—both within and outside FAO.

The 15th AREM was critical to provide ECTAD teams at country and regional levels with strategic focusses and areas of works amid prevailing opportunities and challenges. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and its related restrictions continues to have major impacts to the ability of the ECTAD teams to deliver field programme using conventional approaches. The world has entrusted its hope in vaccines. However, after almost six months of vaccine rollout, vaccine coverage was still barely at approximately 7 percent globally (26 April 2021). The new FAO Strategic Framework 2022 – 2031 with 20 Programme Priority Areas and four cross-cutting/cross-sectional “*accelerators*” provides a corporate direction for the ECTAD programme in all its programmatic interventions. The main resource partner of the ECTAD programme, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), expressed its interest to collaborate with FAO under the Global Health Security Program (GHSP) until 2027. For USAID to continue to make investment to FAO, at least at a similar annual projection, the new funding agreement between USAID and FAO will need to be established for the 2023 funding cycle onward. In Asia, ECTAD country teams and at the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) are implementing the new multi-year projects funded by USAID, under the name GHSP until 2024 (GHSP-Asia). Discussion has been ongoing on how to manage the transition of GHSP-Asia amid the need to close the current and open the new USAID-FAO funding agreement. Results of the recent evaluation on the Emerging Pandemic Threats 2 (EPT-2) emphasized the importance of ECTAD and need to improve its delivery on some key crosscutting issues, including innovation, private sector engagement, and gender.

Taking note of the above, the 15th AREM aimed to update programme priorities at the country and regional levels and discuss key strategic direction for ECTAD Asia programme for 2021/2022 and beyond.

Objectives

- Review the countries' and regional priorities focusing on the current disease/animal health situation, emerging matters that may influence livestock production, risk of disease introduction and animal health status, as well as the governments' policies to address the risks;
- Discuss the draft Strategic Vision and Framework for the Global Health Security Programme (GHSP) 2022 and 2023 – 2027;
- Review and discuss the potential scenarios for the transition of the current multi-year GHSP-Asia programme;
- Review, share experience, and discuss ways to improve programme delivery of identified cross-cutting issues on innovation, private sector engagement, and gender;
- Review and discuss ways to strengthen coordination and collaboration among ECTAD and other programme activities at headquarters, regional and country levels, as One FAO.

Participants

The meeting convened 152 participants from the following:

- Country teams, led by Team Leaders or CTAs as well as interested country team members from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Viet Nam;
- Technical and Operations personnel from FAO-RAP (ECTAD and Regular Programme);
- Relevant technical and operations personnel from FAO headquarters;
- Other interested ECTAD colleagues from the other regions;
- Invited partners as resource persons.

Format – virtual (Zoom)

After registering for the meeting, participants received a confirmation email containing link and information about joining the meeting.

Date

Day 1: Friday 14 May 2021

Day 2: Monday 24 May 2021

Day 3: Monday 31 May 2021

Session 1: Scene setting and important programme updates

1.1 Introduction of ECTAD country and RAP teams

FAO ECTAD RAP and country offices in the Asia programme

Session 1 of the meeting started with each ECTAD office in the Asia programme giving brief introductions on their respective office organizational structure and implemented projects.

1.2 Update on FAO Animal Health Programme

Keith Sumption, Chief Veterinary Officer, Director of Joint Centre for Zoonoses and AMR (CJW) and Leader of Animal Health Programme (NSAH), FAO

The presentation provided updates regarding the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022 – 2031, One Health being elevated as one of the 20 priority programmes, the approved FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) 2021 – 2025, and the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme.

Updates were also given on transboundary diseases, including the global avian influenza strategy, the theory of change regarding the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADS), the global control on African swine fever (ASF), and the continuing support from FAO towards the Progressive Control Pathway for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PCP-FMD).

In future, FAO will work on integrating better disease intelligence and early warning. Upscaling capacity development was also highlighted where the role of FAO should shift from being the trainer (provider) to supporting training systems to become sustainable at the national level. In addition, the Virtual Learning Centre (VLC) initiative will be used to provide virtual trainings at the field level, accompanied by a web-based tool to track completion of trainings and for managers to manage workforce. Lastly, FAO will seek funding for the tripartite common work rather than just for the organization, for example the AMR Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) (See [Annex 1](#)).

1.3 ECTAD programme update at global level

Mirela Hasibra, Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer, Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO

The presentation provided updates on the current grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the transitions into the new grant. The current USAID grant will close around 2022-2023, instead of the original date of 2024. The new grant that is currently in discussion, also known as the Global Health Security Program (GHSP), will expand over the period of 2022 – 2027 (See [Annex 2](#)).

From the discussion in the meeting, it was clarified that all project terminal reports should use the FAO terminal report template; and, should be submitted to USAID three months after the not-to-exceed (NTE) dates, therefore by March 2022. It was further confirmed that the Emerging Pandemic Threats 2 (EPT-2) programme in Asia could not be extended into 2022 as GHSP has already started for ECTAD Asia. In mentioning GHSP, it was raised that, in some countries, the project document consultations and approval process with government counterparts had taken up more than 15 months.

1.4 Presentation on the draft Strategic Vision and Framework for the Global Health Security Programme (GHSP), and discussion on GHSP-Asia programme implementation and transition to the new USAID-FAO funding agreement

Jeffrey Gilbert, Senior One Health Advisor/ECTAD Global Programme Coordinator, FAO

Subash Morzaria, Senior Animal Health Advisor, FAO

The drafted Strategic Vision and Framework for the GHSP will be a guide in moving the programme forward. It was noted that the programme should meet the needs of the governments and beneficiary states while acknowledging the requirements from the donors. Relevant comments and changes from various teams had been incorporated into the draft through an interactive process. The draft had also considered the recommendations from the external evaluation of EPT-2 programme (See [Annex 3](#)).

Some feedbacks from USAID were on the geographic expansion and epidemiological trends, and the prioritization of in-country national laboratories over regional laboratory capacity building. Other topics to be discussed with USAID include policy, private sector engagement (PSE), big data management/analytics, FAO's role at the wildlife interface, and the stockpile.

The next phase would be to try incorporating the feedbacks received from USAID such as on the topic of geographic expansion and laboratory capacity building. Once the document is approved by USAID, it will form the basis for the transition period of the 2023-2027 programme.

Session 2: Innovation

2.1 Introduction to innovation

Mary Joy Gordoncillo, Regional Project Coordinator (AMR), ECTAD, FAO RAP

The presentation introduced the meaning of innovation, how to be innovative, how to optimize innovation at the office, and provided examples in the context of AMR. In the FAO Strategic Framework 2022 – 2031, innovation is one of the four cross-cutting, cross-sectional “accelerators” to achieve better life, better production, better nutrition, and better environment.

To optimize innovation at our office, it should be considered that innovation is not limited to just technology but also involves other mechanisms, namely policy, institutional, financial, and social, to address the core needs and areas of the GHSP framework. FAO's collective force should be harnessed by building on the strengths available, having a cohesive direction such as a clear innovation strategy, and creating a reinforcing environment for innovation.

2.2 Innovationshop – an interactive workshop on innovation solutions

Using the mural board application, participants were put into groups to provide their inputs in the following pillars: risk mitigation for (re-)emerging zoonoses with epidemic and pandemic potentials (emerging infectious diseases - EIDs), for endemic zoonoses (EZs), and for AMR, capacity development, and lastly policy and advocacy support (see [Annex 4](#)).

Within the context of each pillar, participants provided their inputs by answering questions on 1) what kind of innovations have they already applied; and, 2) what were the suggested innovative solutions.

2.3 Plenary discussion and Q&A

Each group's facilitator presented a summary of the inputs given by the participants on the mural board application.

2.4 Sharing of RAP experience on Virtual Learning Centre

Corissa Miller, Virtual Learning Centre for Asia and the Pacific Project Manager, EuFMD/FAO

Tang Hao, Virtual Learning Centre for Asia and the Pacific Coordinator, ECTAD, FAO RAP

This presentation gave insights into what the VLC can offer. Virtual learning can change the learning behaviour because it offers customized learning pace, interactive self-assessment, and life-long learning process. The centre focuses on expanding from training animal health practitioners to improve capacity for management of priority diseases and health threats, to including training materials across a range of disciplines tailored to needs of the region.

In addition, VLC develops a strong partnership with regional training providers and has interactive, tailored, and tutored courses. Moreover, the quality management system is maintained throughout the training life cycle (See [Annex 5](#)).

During the meeting, participants were also briefed on the VLC's establishment. They also discussed planned implementation of VLC at RAP; and, how it could support relevant capacity building programmes for field projects in Asia.

Session 3: Private sector engagement

3.1 Introduction – PSE in ECTAD Asia

Damian Tago-Pacheco, Regional Animal Health Economics and Value Chains Coordinator, ECTAD, FAO RAP

Mr Pacheco highlighted the main reasons to engage with the private sector. The first was the impact on the programme's activities as the private sector plays tremendous role in terms of development. The second reason was sustainability; instead of delivering services, a market system where the services are delivered in a sustainable way should be set up, also known as the market-based approach.

There is currently an opportunity to engage with the private sector, as there is institutional shift in FAO (internal driver) and donor support (external driver). It was also mentioned that FAO RAP is shifting from an opportunistic approach to a strategic approach (see [Annex 6](#)).

3.2 ECTAD Asia Roadmap for Private Sector Engagement

Farrah Adam, Private Sector Engagement Specialist, FAO RAP

Ms Adam explained that the ECTAD Asia Roadmap for PSE has been designed according to ECTAD's interest in having a strategic approach towards the private sector, focusing on engagement quality and building long-term relationships. The roadmap consisted of a roadmap planner and activity descriptions, consultations with ECTAD teams, and stakeholder mapping (identification of key actors).

Regarding the roadmap planner, there were five steps including defining PSE purpose, planning PSE, approaching the private sector, defining the work plan and securing arrangements, and lastly, monitoring PSE. When it comes to stakeholder mapping in practice, the purpose was to identify relevant actors that were critical for ECTAD's success and impact maximization (see [Annex 7](#)).

3.3 TRANSFORM

Jason Shelton, Cargill

In the presentation, it was explained that TRANSFORM stands for Transformational Strategies for Farm Output Risk Mitigation, and there are four partners working with Cargill on this: USAID, Ausvet, International Poultry Council, and Heifer International. The goal is to sustainably strengthen animal-sourced food systems to lessen AMR and prevent zoonoses and transboundary animal diseases (TADs). In other words, the goal is to improve human health through improving animal health on the farms.

The objectives included improving on-farm disease prevention surveillance among farmers, commitment from poultry industry to policies and standards, and improving biosecurity and on-farm practices. TRANSFORM has been implemented in four countries, namely Kenya, India, Viet Nam, and Indonesia. The animal species involved are swine (mainly Viet Nam), dairy, shrimp, and poultry (all four countries). The key next steps included completing the work plan and the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) process, operation set up in each country, and connecting with key implementing partners in the countries to align with the work connected to TRANSFORM (see [Annex 8](#)).

3.4 Panel discussion: PSE in practice and lessons learned

3.4.1 DFAT intervention in Myanmar

David Hadrill, Country Team Leader, ECTAD, FAO Myanmar

In his presentation, Mr Hadrill shared about how the team and the farmers worked together to resolve the issues in the field. The problem was antimicrobials were being used routinely in poultry production. The solution identified was to set up means to market profitable, healthy eggs at the farms. Farmers were encouraged to form a group, namely the Healthy Eggs Production Group with a logo. With this, FAO facilitated the group's discussion with a supermarket chain to market the eggs that were produced without antibiotics. As consumers needed certification as a guarantee of the eggs, the team engaged the veterinary authorities and the Myanmar Organic Agriculture Group.

It was noted that FAO was well placed to assist in this initiative, as farmers would find it challenging to meet with supermarkets without FAO's facilitation. However, there were several challenges and lessons learned from this intervention. Firstly, the eggs were placed among all the other city farm products at the supermarket. Secondly, there were fundamental differences in viewpoints in problem-solving between FAO and the private sector. Finally, collaborations such as these required a lot of time and effort.

3.4.2 AMR work in Bangladesh

Jay Prakash Ray, Square Pharmaceuticals

Mr Ray provided an insight on the antimicrobial usage in Bangladesh and highlighted the benefit gained from collaborating with FAO in awareness raising. There is a need to raise awareness to all stakeholders

to use antimicrobials in a restrictive manner. As FAO and ECTAD have such a platform to do so, Mr Ray's organization is collaborating with FAO ECTAD on this matter.

3.4.3 AMR work in the region (RAP)

Mary Joy Gordoncillo, Regional Project Coordinator (AMR), ECTAD, FAO RAP

There were different drivers for public sector (public good) and private sector (private good driven by private interest and we need to respect that), and it is important to find a common ground where both will benefit. It was further emphasized that FAO is a collective force in the region and the private sector can view this as a good market to work with.

3.5 Next steps

Farrah Adam, Private Sector Engagement Specialist, FAO RAP

The presentation revisited the PSE roadmap planner. To complete phase 1 on defining PSE purpose, there needs to be finalizations of consultations, PSE mission building, and value proposition. Completing the stakeholder mapping, actors' prioritization, ECTAD PSE session, and linkages with One Health would mean completing 50 percent of phase 2 on planning PSE. To complete 20 percent of phase 3 on approaching the private sector would require completing stakeholder interviews, pre-screening, and content drafting for ECTAD outreach materials (see [Annex 9](#)).

It was noted that phases 4 and 5 have not yet started, and that phases 2 – 5 should be conducted during the PSE process.

Session 4: Gender

4.1 Background and conceptual foundations

Lam Tsang (Sophie), Technical Specialist, ECTAD, FAO RAP

The presentation provided an overview of Session 4 and basic concepts on gender, including general myths about gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and the difference in terminologies (see [Annex 10](#)).

4.2 Results of gender needs assessment

Margherita Maffii, Gender Specialist, ECTAD, FAO RAP

Prior to this session, the gender needs assessment survey was launched. The survey was an initial but crucial step to understand the skills and knowledge gaps of ECTAD Asia colleagues related to gender equality in order to identify needs and priorities of training materials and gender mainstreaming interventions.

The survey received 40 respondents (20 females, 19 males, and one preferred not to answer). Of the 40 respondents, 67 percent were staff from the ECTAD country offices and 33 percent were regional office staff. The comments given in the survey acknowledged the importance of gender equality, gender budgeting, and gender mainstreaming in general in the area of work implemented (see [Annex 11](#)).

4.3 FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020 - 2030

Kae Mihara, Gender Officer, FAO RAP

The presentation gave an overview of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020 – 2030, including gender equality objectives, twin-track strategy (gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions),

minimum standards, requirements for centres/divisions/country offices, and the roles and responsibilities of gender focal points and all employees (see [Annex 12](#)).

4.4 Gender in livestock, animal health and disease control

Margherita Maffii, Gender Specialist, ECTAD, FAO RAP

Regarding gender and livestock, women play significant roles in livestock value chains as suppliers, traders, labourers, and retailers. There is gender inequality in the access, control, ownership and decision-making power of land, asset, technologies, services, time, and voice, to name but a few.

Regarding gender, animal health and diseases, women and men have different roles and responsibilities in livestock, animal care and health care. Gender inclusive approaches are essential to reduce risks, increase protection, and enhance responses. By including women, our knowledge in animal health will increase since women are involved in animal care.

Regarding lessons learned and ways forward, it was noted that the significant role of women at different poultry value chain's nodes was mostly ignored. Women were scarcely involved in communication and campaigns. There was also a lack of gender sensitivity in epidemiology and emergency plans and activities. On a positive note, partnerships with gender sensitive stakeholders can make a difference. Ways forward should think strategically about what works for women, adopt empowering methodologies, enhance women's participation, agency, and leadership, and pilot the approaches (see [Annex 13](#)).

4.5 Experience sharing from countries

4.5.1 Lao PDR: Gender issues in poultry value chain

Tosapol Dejyong, International Animal Health and Value Chain Specialist, ECTAD, FAO RAP

The presentation explained about the gender-related elements in the poultry value chain study that was implemented in five Northern provinces of Lao PDR two years ago. Although this was not a gender study, the questionnaire in the study did include a few questions on gender. At this point in the presentation, a poll was launched in the virtual meeting to engage participants in responding to the gender questions from the study.

Gender-related data gathered from the study included the gender composition and gender constraints on poultry value chain and the percentage of male/female in activities on poultry farms. The results revealed that the one with the knowledge was not always the one that attended the campaigns. In addition, women had less confidence in expressing their opinions at steering committees and formal meetings, especially when men dominated the meeting (See [Annex 14](#)).

4.5.2 Bangladesh: Addressing gender in the ECTAD Bangladesh programme

ECTAD, FAO Bangladesh

The presentation provided the context, underlying drivers, situation on the ground, and the opportunities identified that could catalyze change. In terms of background, there has been deeply embedded culturally linked gender inequalities, and limited quality gender-related and gender-disaggregated data in Bangladesh. The root drivers of the situation included institutional discrimination, domestic duties expected of women, and workplace harassment.

To create impact, the team needed to learn what was happening on the ground. This was achieved by actively bringing diverse gender perspectives onto the team, exploring gender roles within the team, and seeking input from leading experts with more experience on the issues in question than the team had. Through various events organized, opportunities, which can catalyze change, were identified, including empowering female managers to lead, and amplify gender-related issues within all the major programmes, to name but a few (see [Annex 15](#)).

In the second part of the presentation, team members shared personal stories from the field to give realistic insights into the situation and the changes that have happened.

4.6 Introduction to gender mainstreaming methodologies in Animal Health

Margherita Maffii, Gender Specialist, ECTAD, FAO RAP

The presentation provided an introductory overview of methodologies that are driving gender mainstreaming in general, and how gender mainstreaming should intersect the project cycle. The central element that drives gender mainstreaming is gender analysis, which will inform the project identification process, providing the elements for a theory of change, for the strategic approach, for the identification of milestones and indicators and for the measures of progress.

The elements, depth and scope of gender analysis, which is a systematic sex-disaggregated data collection process applied to a specific sector and context, were discussed, and entry points related to livestock and animal health were highlighted through different examples of sector gender studies.

Secondly, the presentation focused on strategic approaches that support and promote gender equality and women's empowerment, highlighting the need to support a progressive cascade of activities that allows women to gain strength, self-confidence, recognition, ability and agency to an active role and become equal partners in development (see [Annex 16](#)).

Conclusion and closing

Kachen Wongsathapornchai, Regional Manager, ECTAD, FAO RAP

Dominique Burgeon, Director, FAO Liaison Office in Geneva

In his concluding remarks, Mr Wongsathapornchai extended his thanks to FAO colleagues and to external participants that joined the meeting such as from the private sector. He shared that the topics presented and discussed in this meeting were to be regarded as sensitizers. They will be addressed/ followed-up differently after the meeting as they were at different stages of progress. Regarding private sector engagement at FAO for instance, the desk review has been completed and the FAO private sector engagement strategy launched, initial country consultation conducted, and regional roadmap developed. The next step will be to implement the roadmap and build capacities at ECTAD regional and country programmes.

Concerning gender-related activities, the needs assessment that was previously conducted with ECTAD colleagues will guide further country-level consultations. There will be a plan to conduct desk review to complete the gender analysis, and develop a regional roadmap, followed by its implementation. In addition to the ongoing work on innovation, ECTAD at RAP will continue to brainstorm on the types of support and innovative experiences to be provided to country teams.

In his closing remarks, Mr Burgeon extended his congratulations to ECTAD at RAP and country teams, on the work implemented in the region by the team and the recognition gained over the years from partners. He highlighted the importance of One Health and integrating animal health in the work of the United Nations and FAO through reminding colleagues at the country level to work together with their respective FAO country office.

Annex

1. [Updates on FAO Animal Health Programme](#)
2. [ECTAD programme global update](#)
3. [Draft FAO Strategic Framework for GHSP](#)
4. [Innovationshop mural board](#)
5. [Virtual Learning Centre at RAP](#)
6. [PSE introduction](#)
7. [PSE Roadmap: Asia Pacific](#)
8. [TRANSFORM project overview](#)
9. [Next steps: PSE Roadmap](#)
10. [Background and conceptual foundations on gender](#)
11. [Results of gender needs assessment survey](#)
12. [FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020 – 2030](#)
13. [Gender in livestock, animal health and diseases](#)
14. [Gender issues in poultry value chain in Lao PDR](#)
15. [Addressing gender in the ECTAD Bangladesh programme](#)
16. [Introduction to gender mainstreaming methodologies](#)