



COMMUNIQUÉ

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION INAUGURATES THE CONTINENTAL VETERINARY VACCINE BANK

Addis Ababa, 31 January 2018: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, today inaugurated the Continental Veterinary Vaccine Bank during a ceremony held at the African Union Pan-African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (PANVAC) in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia. He also unveiled the Memorial for Rinderpest Eradication in Africa.

The Vaccine Bank will assist in ensuring emergency preparedness to respond to any possible outbreak of animal diseases in Africa, in particular the resurgence of Rinderpest following its eradication in 2011. The Bank has a capacity of 15 million doses of vaccine. The African Union Commission, through its specialized agencies, namely the Nairobi-based Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR) and PANVAC, played a leading role in eradicating Rinderpest from Africa.

In his speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the Veterinary Vaccine Bank, the Chairperson of the Commission stressed the critical role of livestock in Africa's development and the wellbeing of its people. Against this backdrop, he underlined the African Union commitment to pursue and intensify its efforts towards the control of animal diseases on the continent. He commended PANVAC and IBAR for their outstanding contribution.

The Commission expresses its gratitude to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for its unwavering support to PANVAC, and for the close collaboration with Ethiopia's National Veterinary Institute. The Commission also commends international partners providing support to PANVAC, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations, the World Animal Health Organization, the European Union, the Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development and the Global Alliance for Veterinary Medicine (GALVmed), as well as France, Japan and Spain.

PANVAC was established in 1996 to support the eradication of Rinderpest in Africa, and became an African Union institution in 2004. It is mandated to provide international independent quality control for all veterinary vaccines produced or imported into Africa. It is one of the world's four Rinderpest holding facilities certified by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Animal Health Organization. It is also the only Centre in the world authorized to hold, in the same facility, Rinderpest wild strain and vaccine strains.

It is estimated that 90 per cent of meat consumed in Africa is to be from livestock treated with vaccines certified by PANVAC.

Today's ceremony was attended by the African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, the Minister of State for Livestock and Fisheries of Ethiopia, members of the diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa, representatives of African vaccine producing laboratories and Directors of Veterinary Services, as well as by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.