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Briefing session n° 12:
The role of livestock for ACP countries: Challenges and opportunities ahead

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Introductory remarks

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all today on behalf of the European Commission and in particular on behalf of Luis Riera of DG Development. We are sitting here in the central building of the European Commission and this cannot be anything else than a positive signal given towards the Livestock sector!

Animal Health and Animal Productions are a sub sector of Agriculture and Rural Development (A&RD). All of our efforts in supporting A&RD in developing countries are targeting the Livestock sector too. Nevertheless, Livestock contributions to Food security, Public Health and Environment are often ignored and/or negatively perceived. Therefore a specific focus to this multi-disciplinary sub sector is very relevant. This Briefing Session organised by CTA – professionally as usual! - is therefore very much welcome.

Since several decades, in a time when Livestock sector faced huge reduction of Public investments, EC has developed and maintained an interesting Portfolio of activities to promote Livestock in ACP countries, with a strong focus on Animal Health. Indeed, EC remains the major contributor and a stable donor for the sector. Programs have shifted from direct support to vaccination campaigns (JP15, PARC phase 1 and 2...), to development of surveillance networks (PACE, SERECU...) and the strengthening of Veterinary Governance (harmonisation of medicines' legislation in West Africa and the coming support from EDF10). At national or regional level, EU-funded activities have tackled specific diseases (the more recent one being Avian Flu) and supply chains (meat and dairy). This support will continue during the coming years, with our partner countries and regions. More can be done and I am convinced that in collaboration with other donors and in line with the Paris declaration principles on Aid Effectiveness, the International community will be in a position to respond to the growing demand for support, in view of the expected huge increase of global demand for (animals and) animals products by 2050, to feed 9 billion persons.

During the past decades, we have developed strong and fruitful relationships with International and Regional technical organisations like OIE, FAO, WHO, WTO or AU/IBAR: with each of these unique agencies EC has (or will) signed Framework Agreements to facilitate its collaboration with them. EC is also an important actor in the African Livestock – ALive – Platform which gathers main active stakeholders on the Continent and is now working under the common umbrella of African Union and NEPAD/CAADP. From an EU perspective, together with Member States, EC has settled a working Group called ELIDEV to discuss policy issues. A specific output of this Group will be presented later today.

As it is the case for Agriculture and Rural Development, efficient Livestock development requires long term commitment, strong political will from partners' governments, concerted financial support from donors, participation from all branches of the private sector, good cooperation and solidarity among nations, and integrated and harmonized approaches backed-up by technical and scientific expertise. A heavy menu indeed!

In Europe, fighting against Foot and Mouth Disease and Classical Swine Fever has led to a common harmonised legislation on contagious animal diseases which is a prerequisite for the establishment of the EU internal market in animals and animal products. Such a common strategy combines all available tools such as: trade and movement control, vaccination, surveillance, etc. Livestock policies have often served as a pilot case for other policies. One example: the integrated approach to control diseases and to guarantee Food safety "from stable to table" implying requirements on traceability, audit and inspection is now used in other sectors like Fisheries and Forests.

Finally, I would like to point out the importance of Research for Development in the Livestock sector to improve its contribution to Food Security and to MDGs, but also to develop strong science-based arguments for the sector which is not always well perceived. For example, for post Kyoto negotiations, evidence should be further collected to give the right picture of the sector to negotiators in terms of its (negative) contribution to climate change but also in terms of its potential contribution to mitigation, without neglecting the necessary adaptation of the sector, a key element for Developing Countries.

To conclude I would like to reassure our partners from Developing Countries on the recognition of the contribution of the Livestock sector to their economies and should they decide to invest more for its sustainable development, promoting environmentally-friendly options, we are willing to continue to support them. Technical solutions exist as we will probably learn today; the challenge seems to be more on the political side.

Thank you for your attention.