

Second Meeting  
Geneva, 6-10 December 2004

Meeting of Experts  
Geneva, 19-30 July 2004  
Items 5 and 6 of the agenda

**Strengthening of the national regulatory activity as a mechanism for the surveillance,  
detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting  
humans, animals and plants \***

**Submitted by the Republic of Cuba**

1. In 1959, at the Triumph of the Revolution Cuba, as one of its main objectives, undertook the development of basic mechanisms for the control and prevention of diseases affecting humans, animals and plants. In the case of those affecting humans, the National Health System was created and it is formed by a network of family doctors offices, polyclinics and hospitals for primary health care; in addition, there are hygiene and epidemiology centers and units at all levels which attend the prevention, control and diagnosis of infectious diseases.

2. In the agricultural field, the National System of Plant Health is in charge of the surveillance, diagnosis and handling of diseases and plagues, while in the case of animal diseases, the Institute of Veterinary Medicine was created and it is in charge of regulating all aspects of animal health, including health control and a network of veterinary diagnosis throughout the national territory.

**Human health**

3. The Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) through all Centers and Units of hygiene and epidemiology created the Hygiene and Epidemiology System, which is aimed at establishing measures for combating of epidemics, the state health inspectorate, the hygienic and epidemiological prophylaxis and health education.

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4. This system is applied, among others, to the following aspects:
  - (i) Organization and control of plans, programs and hygienic and epidemiological campaigns;
  - (ii) Diseases of obligatory declaration;
  - (iii) Vector control and eradication;
  - (iv) International health control;
  - (v) Health measures in emergency situations due to natural disasters of a different kind;
  - (vi) Environment health control;
  - (vii) Labor safety and hygiene.
  
5. This system includes plans, programs and hygienic and epidemiological campaigns designed to carry out studies in order to specify and establish methods for prevention and control of diseases or other changes in human health and to promote the people's participation in these plans. The following measures are stipulated in the application of actions for prevention and control of transmissible diseases:
  - (i) Isolation of confirmed, apparent cases and other possible human reservoirs;
  - (ii) Implementation of quarantine measures for people sensitive to a certain disease and that have been in contact with certain reservoirs;
  - (iii) Isolation and quarantine measures in animal reservoirs in case of zoonosis;
  - (iv) Obligatory laboratory exams;
  - (v) Implementation of preventive or therapeutic products;
  - (vi) Inspectorate of transportation means, passengers, their belongings or any object considered as a source of infection or route of disease transmission;
  - (vii) Disinfection and rodent control of means and facilities;
  - (viii) Health control of reservoirs, infection or contamination sources and transmission mechanisms in order to neutralize them.
  
6. Another element in this system is health control, which includes all branches of hygiene and combating of epidemics and transmissible diseases affecting public health. This type of control is applied to: vector control, measures in case of epidemics, environmental health, atmosphere and

soil, solid wastes, waters, aqueducts, drain systems, urbanizations, bodies and human remains cremation, medicines, food, school hygiene and medicine, measures for health control.

7. Aimed at avoiding the introduction of diseases nonexistent in Cuba which are very likely to be received due to favorable climate conditions, the international health control system was created, through which we monitor ports and airports with international traffic as well as ships and airplanes arriving at the national territory. This activity is performed by a health team with the appropriate personnel, equipment and facilities.

### **Plant health**

8. The Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) through the National Center for Plant Health, created the phytosanitary System which is aimed at protecting the territory from the introduction and spreading of plagues that may affect plants as well as at achieving a satisfactory phytosanitary status by means of the prevention, location, control and eradication of plants' plagues.

9. This system includes the state plant service, determination and control of pesticides and biological means, export, import, internal circulation, agricultural, forest and biological means producers. The system is formed by the following elements:

- (i) State service for plant protection;
- (ii) Export, import and internal circulation;
- (iii) Forest, agricultural and biological means producers.

10. The State Service for plant protection is the group of activities and measures dealing with the phytosanitary protection of economic crops and flora in general as well as its products whether in natural or semi-elaborate state. It is developed in two main directions: plant quarantine and phytosanitary protection and it is applied to: agricultural and forest crops, woods, gardens, seedbeds, nurseries, seed banks, flowers, ornamental and medicinal plants, seeds, no matter their state and plant parts, organisms and microorganisms harmful to plants and biological means of struggle, land, organic fertilizer and any host product or plague vehicles, transportation means, costume houses, post offices and other facilities used for storing agricultural or forest products, quarantine stations, border posts and materials used as plague reservoirs, etc.

11. The activities included are:

- (i) Signs and prognosis of main crop, woods and pasture plagues;
- (ii) Import and export of subquarantined materials;
- (iii) Sampling and phytosanitary and plant quarantine inspectorate in all agricultural and forest areas and in any other place used for storing, transport, or perform activities related to products of plant origin, pesticides and biological means.

## **Veterinary medicine**

12. The Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) through the Institute of Veterinary Medicine created the veterinary medicine service which includes the group of activities and preventive, welfare and sanitary-veterinary measures aimed at guaranteeing animal health in general and the best conditions of products of animal origin such as raw materials of that origin. Its objectives are to protect the national territory from the introduction and spreading of diseases of animal origin and to achieve a satisfactory sanitary-veterinary status through the prevention, location, control and eradication of animal diseases.

13. Regulations in the veterinary medicine service are applied to: animals, including animal bodies, feeds and forrages and products used for animals grazing purposes as well as production, reproduction, breeding and all aspects regarding animal development, research centers related to animal health and institutions handling relevant biological material, objects in general carrying microorganisms, organisms or vectors causing diseases, medicinal, prophylactic and diagnosis biopreparations, and biological stimulants, for animal treatment, animals, import and export products and raw materials, centers for animal quarantine, units in imports, exports, travelers transit and natural or foreign persons control posts.

14. This service is mainly based in the following elements:

- (i) Sanitary-veterinary quarantine;
- (ii) Export, import and internal circulation;
- (iii) Reproduction, breeding and slaughter.

15. The sanitary-veterinary quarantine includes the quarantine regime, sanitary-veterinary alert and sanitary-veterinary emergency.

16. The quarantine regime is the group of measures adopted with animals, their products, persons and means related to them in case of epizootia or pathologies that may cause an epidemic outbreak. This state is declared by the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG).

17. Sanitary-veterinary alert: counterepizootic preventive and protection measures adopted in case of epidemic outbreaks in countries with which we hold relations or in case of biological war. This state is declared by the MINAG.

18. Sanitary-veterinary emergency: Measures adopted in case of the emergence of an exotic disease at a national or local level. This state is declared by the Council of State.

19. These three mechanisms complement biological safety regulations that also control, with a different vision, activities related to the use, import and export of biological agents and their products, organisms and fragments of these holding genetic information that affects human beings, animals and plants.

## References<sup>1</sup>

**Decree Law No. 137.** De la Medicina Veterinaria. Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba No. 6, April 19, 1993. Regular edition.

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**Decree No. 139.** Reglamento de la ley de salud pública. Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba, Havana, Monday, February 22, 1988, year LXXXVI. Number 12, page 177.

**Law No. 41** of Public Health. Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba, Havana, Monday, August 15, 1983, year LXXXI. Number 61, page 967.

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<sup>1</sup> All these documents can be consulted at the data base of technical and legal documents "LegalBio 2002" which the Cuban Delegation gave to the Secretariat last year, or contacting to the Permanent Mission of Cuba in Geneva.