

**SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION, MALAWI CHAPTER, ON THE CLOSING OF THE  
COURSE IN EPIDEMIOLOGY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE  
TO TSETSE AND TRYPANOSOMOSIS:  
CENTER FOR TICKS AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES, LILONGWE.  
3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007 – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

The Representative of the Director for the Centre for Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases

The Director for Animal Health and Industry

Distinguished Guests

Course Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here to witness the closing of the course in Epidemiology with special emphasis in Tsetse and Trypanosomosis specifically requested by the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, and designed for its staff working in the Department of Veterinary Services in that country. I believe this is the third group from DRC to attend the Epidemiology courses at the Centre since 2005. So far all the participants have been DRC nationals working for the Veterinary Department. However in addition to the three Epidemiology courses, another group of six participants from the same country attended a 4-weeks course in Laboratory Diagnostics during mid 2005. This reflects the

cordial relationship between the Centre and the government of the DRC and more importantly the trust the DRC government has in the Centre. These courses are a result of the agreement between the Directorate General of Development Cooperation (DGDC) office in Kinshasa, the Belgium Technical Cooperation (BTC) office in Kinshasa and the Centre for Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases, CTTBD, for the latter to carry out the training.

The current course, *Epidemiology with particular reference to Tsetse and Trypanosomosis*, was requested by the DRC government noting the enormous impact tsetse and trypanosomosis has on the livestock industry in the country. It is a well known fact that the disease is an important constraint to livestock productivity especially in sub-Saharan Africa where about 35 million head of cattle in an area of approximately 10 million square kilometers are under threat. Unfortunately the adverse effects of this disease are felt mostly in the rural areas where development is thus retarded even further not to mention the suffering brought by the disease to humans through Sleeping Sickness.

The objectives of the course were therefore targeted at equipping senior staff in the veterinary department with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to handle and analyse animal health and production data. They should be able to interpret data of clinical experiments, surveillance, diagnosis of diseases and control and eradication of economically important I am confident that after 8 weeks the participants have a good understanding of the ecology and epidemiology of diseases and can confidently predict future patterns of diseases, with trypanosomosis at the core and receiving special attention.

It is hoped that the course will contribute to the monitoring of the extent of the spread and risk posed by animal diseases especially trypanosomosis and other trans-boundary diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), Anthrax and Rinderpest which are rampant in the region. As senior personnel you will also be expected to impart the knowledge and skills you have gained from here to other staff at your various work stations. The long term effects will be better and efficient disease control strategies and improved productivity of the livestock. May I therefore urge all participants to seek to preserve and add to the knowledge gained from this refresher course if any impact is to be felt in the DRC, the SADC region and the African continent as a whole.

On behalf of the African Union, let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Belgium, in particular the Belgium Technical Cooperation, BTC, who sponsored this course and also for the support they have given to the Centre for so many years.

Finally I hope that the eight weeks you have been in Malawi, the Warm Heart of Africa, have been a memorable experience which will stay with you for the rest of your life. May I also add that it is inevitable for disagreements or other forms of disappointments to be experienced where a number of people are gathered, more so if they are from different backgrounds, but I have the hope that you will take with you the pleasant experiences and pardon any shortfalls you may have come across during your stay at the Centre and the country as a whole. I wish you a safe trip back to DRC and request that you keep in touch with the Director and staff of the Centre.

2007

Speech by the Executive Secretary of the African Union, Malawi chapter, on the closing of the course in epidemiology with particular reference to tsetse and trypanosomosis: Center for Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases, Lilongwe. 3rd September 2007 – 26th October 2007

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