

Subject: CITES No. 2023/028 - Singapore
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From: Renhui XIE (NPARKS)
To: UNOG-UNEP-CITES Info
CC: Thea Henriette Carroll, Anna WONG (NPARKS)
Attachments: OneHealth in Singapore 28 Mar 2023.pdf

Message Classification: *Restricted*

Dear colleagues,

Pursuant to CITES No. 2023/028, pls find attached Singapore's write-up on the measures put in place under the One Health framework to prevent and minimise risk of zoonotic diseases. We note that the measures will be complied on the CITES website, and appreciate if a draft can be shared with us ahead of publication.

Thank you, and pls contact me if you need any further clarification.

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ONE-HEALTH IN SINGAPORE

Background

1 The One Health Platform in Singapore, established in 2012^[1], consists of the One Health Coordinating Committee and Working Group, comprising representatives from the Ministry of Health (MOH; human health), National Parks Board (NParks; animal health and CITES authority in Singapore), National Environment Agency (NEA; environmental health), Singapore Food Agency (SFA; food safety and food supply resilience) and Public Utilities Board (PUB; water quality and safety)^[2].

^[1] While the different One Health agencies had already been working closely together prior to 2012, the formation of the One Health Platform cemented this relationship.

^[2] PUB was involved in work on Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and joined the OH Agencies in 2017.

2 Across the whole of government in Singapore, the various One Health agencies lead the programs in their respective domain areas (animals, environment, human and food). Cross-sectoral and interagency collaborations are guided by the current One Health approach. It recognises that the different domains of human health, animal health, environmental health and food supply resilience are interlinked and have facilitated interagency collaborations and coordination during outbreak management in the recent past such as foodborne outbreaks and zoonotic disease outbreaks.

3 Under the One Health Platform, the One Health Coordinating Committee (OHCC) has been established to provide strategic direction and set priorities One Health issues in Singapore. The OHCC is co-chaired by senior officers, including Director-Generals of agencies and Deputy Director Medical Service of the Ministry of Health. The high level representation ensures co-ownership of multidisciplinary One Health matters as well as to promote parity in coordination and collaboration. The OHCC will champion interagency coordination and collaboration on One Health issues, including the progress and effectiveness of the One Health action plans. The One Health Working Group (OHWG) work under the direction of the OHCC to formulate, coordinate, implement and review programmes, initiatives and action plans. Project teams may be established, as and when necessary, to focus on specific areas of One Health issues.

4 One Health partner agencies work closely on several thrusts and the One Health Platform has yielded many positive outcomes, including the following:

- (a) Coordination and alignment of One Health agencies' approach to prevent introduction or escalation of infectious disease of public health concern, and prepare for coordinated response (during peace time). Examples include development of response plans for public health treats as well as protocols for joint zoonotic and food-borne disease investigation.

- (b) Coordinated training for capability building and development in public health
- (c) Formation of a strong intersectoral network for prompt cross-agency consultation and coordination where necessary
- (d) Coordinated efforts to combat Antimicrobial resistance, through the development of the national action plan for AMR

Examples of specific activities

5 Collective, the One Health partner agencies organise various workshops and exercises to foster greater multidisciplinary collaboration and cooperation. For example, NParks is conducting a national exercise with all One Health partner agencies to prioritise diseases of One Health concern and developing joint programmes to address the prevention and control of these diseases. Singapore actively participates in platforms for One Health discussions and collaborations and our involvement in the World One Health Congress 2022 in November in Singapore is testament to this.

6 Singapore also recognises Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) as a pressing threat to health globally on 1 November 2017, the One Health AMR Working Group launched the National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) on AMR^[3], bringing together and building on existing efforts in the human, animal, food and environment sectors. This includes efforts in combatting AMR in aquaculture as well.

^[3] Details on the National Strategic Action Plan are available at <https://www.ncid.sg/About-NCID/OurDepartments/Antimicrobial-Resistance-Coordinating-Office/Documents/National%20Strategic%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Antimicrobial%20Resistance.pdf>

7 In the field of wildlife health, conservation efforts and biosurveillance, the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation (CWR) was established by NParks in February 2022 to oversee the rescue, treatment, rehabilitation and subsequent release of native wildlife back to their natural habitats. The centre also supports the NParks biosurveillance framework by providing opportunities for wildlife sampling, with collected data contributing to horizon scanning and early detection of disease emergence within the local wildlife ecosystem. Overall, this allows us to strengthen the One Health approach to identifying potential disease threats and to better monitor, respond and manage emerging diseases accordingly.

Past disease outbreaks

8 Learning from past disease incursions and outbreaks, Singapore, now more than ever, recognises the importance of undertaking a cross-collaborative One Health approach to disease management and prevention.

9 Notably, in the 1990s, Nipah virus in imported pigs resulted in local abattoir workers being infected with the disease. As such, Singapore had to take steps to mitigate risks by stopping imports, which led to a shortage of pigs for slaughter. In 2015, Sequence Type 283 (ST283), a specific strain of Group B *Streptococcus* (GBS) or *Streptococcus agalactiae*, caused an outbreak of invasive GBS infection in more than 160 people in Singapore. The outbreak was linked to the consumption of ready-to-eat (RTE) raw fish of two freshwater fish species - 'Asian bighead carp' and 'snakehead'. This eventually led to a ban in the use of raw freshwater fish in all raw fish dishes in Singapore from 5 December 2015.

10 Even with diseases that Singapore remains free from, such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), Singapore adopts a highly stringent stance in its biosecurity practices to minimise and mitigate any unpreventable risks for disease incursion. Importantly, Singapore recognises the importance of using the principles of compartmentalisation and zoning even before WOAHA developed guidelines to ensure safe trade of food animals whilst managing disease risks. We have continued to work with overseas trading partners and local industries to recognise and import live poultry from highly pathogenic avian influenza disease free zones in neighbouring countries, as well as live pigs from African swine fever free compartments from trading partners.

Working together as ASEAN

11 Singapore also recognises the importance of early detection; effective prevention and preparedness strategies against zoonotic disease incursions and outbreaks at an ASEAN level. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ) aims to facilitate and provide a framework of cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States, with relevant ASEAN Dialogue Partners, ASEAN Development Partners and other stakeholders in the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary animal disease and zoonoses in ASEAN. The formation of ACCAHZ allows for the development and enhancement of information sharing mechanisms and platforms to tackle zoonotic disease outbreaks, and strategies and programmes for disease biosurveillance. With the establishment of ACCAHZ, and the endorsement of the ASEAN Strategy for Preventing Zoonotic Diseases Transmission from Wildlife Trade; together with cooperation with human health and environmental health sector, ASEAN would be better prepared against incursion and containment of transboundary animal disease and zoonoses. Singapore is also the current Chair of the Southeast Asia Wildlife Health Network and Deputy Chair for Asia Pacific Regional Wildlife Health Network. Both networks aim to enhance communications and regional cooperation on One Health matters.

Summary

12 We recognise that a One Health approach is essential as part of safeguarding Singapore against future disease outbreaks. We are committed to preparing for and

preventing any future disease incursions, and have taken active steps over time to enhance human, animal and environment sectorial collaboration and cooperations to combat zoonotic diseases. This has led to strategic actions to combat antimicrobial resistance, and develop joint biosurveillance programmes to monitor potential emergence of diseases for early action. We have close working relationships with our colleagues from the human health, environmental and food sectors, and are building links with counterparts in ASEAN and other countries.