



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

WELCOME ADDRESS

BY

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to the

**THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE JOINT COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN ZOOSES CONTROL PROGRAMME**

Luxor, Egypt, 21–23 November 1999

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this Thirteenth Session of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme and to thank the Government of Egypt for their kind invitation to host the meeting in this historical city, Luxor.

I need not emphasize to this group of experts the magnitude and public health importance, as well as the socioeconomic significance, of zoonoses in the Mediterranean and Middle East countries. But I do wish to emphasize that the control of this group of infections

requires joint coordinated actions from different professional groups as well as sustained international technical cooperation.

Since its establishment, the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme has been instrumental in providing support to the participating countries in the prevention and control of zoonoses and related foodborne diseases. Its input in national control programmes against major zoonoses, in strengthening human resource capabilities and in organization of surveillance on major zoonoses is well documented.

The Programme has also taken the initiative of strengthening effective technical cooperation between its participating countries and within individual countries. It has accomplished this through the organization of seminars, workshops and training courses involving responsible officers for animal and human health and hence it has gained well deserved international recognition.

The programme has also been active in the collection and dissemination of information on zoonoses and foodborne diseases and in the support and implementation of research projects.

The Information Circular issued by the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre in Athens provides important up-to-date information on the epidemiology, diagnosis, prevention, treatment and control of zoonoses and foodborne infections. It makes the activities of the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme more transparent and attractive to all countries of the Mediterranean region.

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, which has been one of the major partners in the development of this programme, is proud that it has proved beyond any doubt to be so effective. In addition to the promotion of zoonoses control activities among its participating countries, it has been an important link between developed and developing countries of the Mediterranean in the exchange of expertise, in technology transfer and in the harmonization of strategies and legislation in the field of zoonoses control and food safety. We

also recognize the important role played by the Programme in strengthening cooperation between medical and veterinary services in the control of zoonoses.

I am very keen to further strengthen cooperation between the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Programme and the Regional Office and I look forward to your discussions and final decision on the plan of work of the Programme for the next biennium. I am confident this will represent another milestone in our joint activities for the prevention and control of zoonoses.

I will close by wishing you a very fruitful and successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Luxor.