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Strengthening PPR Eradication in Conflict-Affected / Security-Fragile African Union Member States: *A Strategy for “Countries with Special Needs”*



Leveraging Lessons from Rinderpest Eradication and Modern Technologies

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Context and Rationale: _____

Many African countries continue to experience insurgency-related violence that has displaced millions—disproportionately women and children—resulting in the collapse of services and markets. Rural livelihoods depend heavily on small ruminants; when herds are lost, food insecurity and acute malnutrition inevitably arise. Following the successful launch of the Pan-African Programme (PAP) for the Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) in February 2025, AU-IBAR presents this position paper to address the unique challenges of implementing PPR eradication in security-fragile and Conflict-Affected African Union member states. Building on the successful global eradication of rinderpest—the only livestock disease ever eradicated—this paper outlines adaptive strategies that leverage modern communication technologies, strategic partnerships with CSOs, NGOs, and innovative approaches to overcome barriers that have historically constrained traditional veterinary programs in conflict-affected, remote and marginalized regions.

With lessons from rinderpest eradication and by leveraging 21st century technologies and partnerships, AU-IBAR, with partners, can lead a continental transformation in how disease eradication can be approached in challenging environments. Success depends on the ability to work through trusted local partners, embrace technological solutions, and maintain flexible, adaptive programming that responds to the dynamic nature of fragile state contexts.

PPR Eradication challenge in security-fragile/Conflict Affected Countries: _____

Peste des Petits Ruminants continues to devastate small ruminant populations across Africa. The formal launch of the PAP in February 2025 marked a crucial advancement for Africa's livestock future, and underscored the urgency of preventing disease persistence to achieve the global eradication target by 2030. Security-fragile countries present exceptional challenges including:

- Weak coordination mechanisms at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels
- Need for zonal-ecosystem approaches
- Lack of innovative combined RP-CBPP vaccines and use of nuclear techniques involving Reference labs for sero surveillance monitoring
- Need for Global eradication verification Tools (WOAH (established as OIE) Pathway, PVS...)
- Limited government presence and inadequate veterinary infrastructure,
- Restricted access to remote pastoral communities,
- Unregulated cross-border livestock movements in ungoverned spaces
- Disrupted supply chains for vaccines and diagnostic materials
- Displacement of pastoral populations and their herds
- Breakdown of traditional livestock management systems



Lessons from Rinderpest Eradication:

Rinderpest eradication faced comparable challenges, particularly in pastoral areas of the Greater Horn of Africa, a region characterised by weak governance, insecurity, and poor infrastructure. . Key lessons include:

- **Community-Centred Approaches:** There are no quick technical or funding fixes for eradication in remote, marginalised communities. Success required rethinking entire systems through inclusive, whole-of-society approaches.
- **Surveillance Innovation:** Eradication required intensive and coordinated efforts involving active surveillance, animal culling, movement restrictions, and structured vaccination programs.
- **Partnership Integration:** Success was contingent on multi-stakeholder collaboration extending beyond traditional veterinary services.

Strategic Framework for PPR Eradication for Fragile States:

First: Adaptive Implementation Principles

Principle 1: Conflict and Security-Sensitive Programming

- Implement flexible, mobile vaccination campaigns that can rapidly adapt to changing security dynamics.
- Utilise Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) for vaccination and basic animal health care.
- Establish vaccination corridors during ceasefire periods or along seasonal transhumance/migration routes.
- Deploy small, locally embedded, and skilled teams rather than large external missions.
- Align Veterinary Services, NGOs/CSOs, local authorities, humanitarian and peace actors, and RECs under one coordinated plan.

Principle 2: Community Ownership and Trust Building

- Engage traditional, religious, opinion women's and youth leaders as primary stakeholders
- Integrate PPR activities within broader community health, security, and livelihood interventions.
- Respect and strengthen traditional livestock management systems while promoting transformative practices.
- Empower local communities by positioning CAHWs as accessible agents for vaccination and animal health consultations.
- Foster trust through transparency, accountability, rapid and robust feedback, and open, two-way dialogues, and responsive feedback mechanisms.

Principle 3: Technology-Enabled Resilience

- Apply intelligence-led surveillance: target trade and transhumance corridors, move samples quickly, and close the offline for rapid response.
- Utilize mobile-based surveillance and reporting systems
- Employ satellite-based livestock tracking and disease monitoring to facilitate early detection and intervention.
- Introduce blockchain-based vaccination certification systems for traceability and data integrity.



Second: NGO Partnership Strategy: Non-governmental organisations provide critical operational capabilities in conflict affected and security-fragile contexts where government systems have limited reach.

Operational advantages:

- Strategic collaboration between governments and NGOs in providing animal healthcare services
- Established presence and community trust in insecure environments
- Capacity to operate across conflict lines and in ungoverned spaces
- Experience in community mobilisation and behaviour change communication
- Flexible funding mechanisms and rapid deployment mechanisms

Strategic Integration:

- Partner with humanitarian NGOs providing services to displaced populations.
- Collaborate with development NGOs focusing on livestock-based livelihoods
- Engage peace-building organizations to promote conflict-sensitive veterinary interventions and create “veterinary peace dividends”
- Work with women-focused NGOs to reach female livestock keepers.
- Promote livestock keeping as a viable livelihood and income source for youth.

Capacity Development:

- Train CAHWs in vaccination, basic animal health care and community engagement strategies during and after programme implementation.
- Build capacity among women’s and youth organisations/cooperatives in small ruminant vaccination and basic animal husbandry.
- Strengthen community advocacy for improved service delivery and inclusive policy dialogue.
- Equip NGO staff with basic veterinary surveillance and vaccination techniques
- Provide equipment and supplies through established NGO distribution networks
- Enhance field staff capacity in vaccination planning, vaccine handling and cold chain management.
- Develop joint monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Create NGO-led community animal health worker programs

Conclusion

The above reaffirms continental ambition, under AU-IBAR leadership, partners and key stakeholders (NGOs/CSOs) to reach PPR eradication by 2030, while ensuring that no Member State is left behind. This framework emphasises adaptive and innovative approaches to overcoming PPR Eradication challenges in security-fragile and conflict-affected Countries currently classified as Countries with Special Needs. It provides a measurable, auditable and context-sensitive route to eradicate PPR by 2030—turning security-fragile and conflict-affected contexts from “last-focus traps” into “quick wins”.

This Conflict-Sensitive and Fragility-Adapted African Union Strategy to Eradicate PPR by 2030 in security-fragile/conflict-affected Countries requires funding support, advocacy, capacity building, well-coordinated and concerted efforts, in creating effective monitoring and delivery mechanism to sustainably implement PPR eradication across the Continent.

For more information:

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