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PRESS RELEASE

Priorities Agreed for WSAVA Foundation's AFSCAN Initiative

The [World Small Animal Veterinary Association \(WSAVA\)](#) Foundation took the first steps towards delivering its African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN) project at a recent meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, during which it identified the priority needs of small companion animal veterinarians in Africa and agreed a roadmap of projects through which AFSCAN can help to meet them.

The WSAVA Foundation funds improvements in the veterinary care of companion animals worldwide through science and education. It unveiled its ground-breaking scheme, AFSCAN, at BSAVA Congress earlier this year. AFSCAN aims to advance standards of veterinary care across Africa through facilitating the creation of a sustainable network of companion animal veterinarians, associations and specialist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. All of its work will have a focus on One Health.

During the three day visit to Nairobi, from 18-20 June, the AFSCAN Project Board met delegates from Kenya, Uganda, Namibia and Nigeria at the Regional Office of the International Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). It also visited the veterinary school at the University of Nairobi and met the Dean of the School and members of academic staff, a student delegation and representatives from the One Health Central and Eastern Africa (OHCEA) Consortium.

The AFSCAN Project Board is chaired by Dr Gabriel Varga, President of the WSAVA Foundation and includes Professor Michael Day (University of Bristol, UK, and WSAVA

Foundation); Dr Theo Kanellos and Mr Greg Andrews (Zoetis); Dr Remo Lobetti (referral practitioner, South Africa) and Dr Alex Thiermann (OIE).

Commenting, Dr Varga said: "Working with the national delegates, we identified a range of projects to support small companion animal veterinarians as they work towards establishing the national associations that will become new members of the WSAVA family. AFSCAN support will take the form of specific sub-projects providing new opportunities in veterinary continuing education, clinical veterinary research, infectious disease surveillance and control of canine rabies.

"For example, African practitioners will be given access to the on-line educational content provided by the North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) *Vetfolio* initiative with access to refurbished computers from the UK charity Computers for Africa. Academic practitioners will also be encouraged to apply for AFSCAN funding for targeted research projects linking African universities with partner institutions in other countries.

He continued: "We will meet again during WSAVA World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, in September and will be joined by additional delegates from Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan and Tanzania.

"AFSCAN will assist small companion animal veterinarians in the creation of national associations because it is the creation of these associations leading, as they do, to enhancements in collaboration, training and best practice sharing, which has proved pivotal in driving enhancements in standards of veterinary care in other regions of the world. Through AFSCAN we have a real opportunity to help advance the veterinary profession across Africa and, in so doing, improve the lives of millions of animals and humans."

The AFSCAN project runs under the auspices of the WSAVA Foundation with Zoetis as a major supporter. Other supporters and sponsors of AFSCAN include the OIE, the NAVC and veterinary digital content provider Vetstream; veterinary charity Worldwide Veterinary Services and its Mission Rabies Project; veterinary equipment supplier Kruise; the Morris Animal Foundation; healthcare advertising agency Circa Health; the University of Veterinary Medicine in Kosice and the WSAVA.



Members of the AFSCAN Project Board and national delegates at the meeting in Nairobi.

Notes to editors:

The AFSCAN project, the first phase of which runs from April 2014 until April 2016, has been developed by the WSAVA Foundation with the backing of the global animal health company Zoetis and a Consortium of other supporters. It aims to achieve its goal through initiating activities in key areas, including:

- Offering grant funding for specific veterinary projects and establishing links between African veterinary researchers and those in institutions in American or European countries.
- Increasing support for and coordination of rabies control projects and setting up new projects.
- The expansion of training and continuing education programmes for veterinarians and other veterinary professionals.
- The support of surveillance systems to monitor infectious and parasitic diseases in companion animals.
- The quest for new funding opportunities and co-operation with current and future Consortium members.

For further information:

Rebecca George, George PR

Tel: 01449 737281/07974 161108