

World Organisation for Animal Health hosts biothreat conference to address high stakes of global health security

PARIS, FRANCE, October 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Amid growing concern over a fragile and conflict-prone world, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) will host a landmark global gathering to advance inclusive dialogue and the formation of transformative alliances for a more secure, healthier future.

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*Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran,
Director General at WOAH*

The [Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction](#) will take place on 28-30 October 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland. Bringing together experts from a variety of fields, the event will offer a platform to discuss rising security risks and strategies to bridge the biological threat reduction gap.

Animal pathogens continue to cause devastation worldwide, with the risks associated with their misuse continuing to be real and evolving. The data paint a staggering picture: with over [75% of emerging diseases](#) and [80% of agents](#) with bioterrorist potential being

zoonotic in nature, animal health emerges as a key pillar of global health security. Other figures show that production animals account for 40% of the global agriculture value, and nearly 1 in 5 people depend on production animals for their income.

"In our increasingly connected and complex world, global health security is also a matter of national security, which makes veterinarians the frontline of defense. Yet, protecting against biological threats requires united action across sectors: security, human, animal and environmental health," said Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, Director General at WOAH.

The interconnectedness between animal, human and environmental health and security underscore the urgent need to prepare for unpredictable scenarios that could quickly escalate into disasters. In 2019, the Global Health Security Index warned that most countries were not ready for a serious outbreak. Less than a year later, the COVID-19 pandemic caught the world off guard, showing how fundamentally weak public health systems were in the face of an unprecedented crisis. Though not intentional, COVID-19 serves as a powerful reminder of how profoundly a biological agent - if weaponised - could disrupt economies and societies on a global

scale.

Today, fast-advancing technologies such as artificial intelligence and synthetic biology add new urgency to action. Regulation is also being outpaced by the speed of technological advances. With fractured barriers to access and development, it has become increasingly possible for anyone with a malicious intent to create and deploy bioweapons. Animals, in particular, could become targets of malicious attacks designed to destabilise food systems and economies.

Over three days, the conference will explore cross-cutting themes high on the global policy agenda. From climate change to misinformation, from cybersecurity to laboratory sustainability, little is off the table. Hosted at the CICG Conference Centre, near Geneva's Palace of Nations, the event will foster discussions on the roles that different sectors working in unison can play to prevent and respond to biological threats.

WOAH has a vast lead in advancing biological threat reduction. Flagship initiatives including 'Building Resilience against Agro-crime and Agro-terrorism' in partnership with FAO and INTERPOL and 'Fortifying Institutional Resilience against Biological Threats', funded by the government of Canada, have helped strengthen national preparedness and institutional capacities in the face of an unpredictable future. WOAHA also works closely in collaboration with WHO on 'laboratory biological risk management, sustainable laboratories (BioPrevail) and Dual Use Research of Concern/promoting responsible conduct in science.

"The eradication of rinderpest, a deadly livestock disease - the first major achievement in animal health and the very reason WOAHA was founded - has showed the world what global collaboration can accomplish. It reminds us that only through collective effort and trust was it possible to eliminate a devastating disease," said Soubeyran.

As 2025 marks an important year in disarmament with the 50th anniversary of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the 100th anniversary of the Geneva Protocol, WOAHA's conference is poised to inspire fruitful collaborations and stronger national commitments to biological threat reduction plans.

"In a world shaped by geopolitical shifts and rising risks enabled by technology, animal health is something we should protect at all costs," concluded Soubeyran. "It's not just about animal health - it's about our security, too. By strengthening biological threat reduction, we protect entire communities. We protect our shared planet."

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