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## Conference 03 – Animal Health & Animal Welfare

### Brucellosis as an example of a re-emerging disease in Eurasia and the Mediterranean area

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Apart from some Western European countries, few countries have successfully eradicated brucellosis caused by *B. melitensis* infections. This disease is particularly common in the Mediterranean region, the Middle East, Central Asia and parts of Latin America. Over the last 10 years, the infection has re-emerged with high prevalence in sheep and goats in particular in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Eurasia.

*B. melitensis* infection is recognized as a significant public health challenge, with a major economic and financial burden in countries where the disease remains endemic. Significant human illness occurs primarily from exposure to contaminated dairy products or from occupational exposure to infected livestock. In small ruminants, abortion, reduced fertility and newborn viability are the major impacts. Management systems for small ruminants vary markedly in these areas and food hygiene practices also are deficient. There are major gaps in the knowledge of many livestock producers, and their practices which are not well focussed on preventive measures. Some of the major constraints have been the under-funded and often weak veterinary administrations, the absence of a clearly defined legal framework, the lack of accurate and reliable surveillance information on the disease in humans and animals, lack of monitoring progress of control programmes, etc.

A technical meeting with the participation of a number of brucellosis experts was convened in Rome by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with WHO and OIE from 11-14 of May, 2009 to update the *B. melitensis* situation in the target region, broaden the understanding for its re-emergence, identify prevailing gaps and assist the countries in developing sound strategies and policies for sustainable *B. melitensis* control programmes.