



AfriFOODlinks

Newsletter

The MENA Region Conference

"One Health - Secure Future"

in Tunis City

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INNTA



The MENA Region Conference "One Health - Secure Future" in Tunis City

In a historic two-day summit that concluded today, Tunisia has positioned itself at the forefront of regional health security, uniting government ministers, global health leaders, and experts from 18 nations across the Middle East, North Africa, and Somalia. The high-level MENA Region One Health Conference, hosted at the International Diplomatic Academy in Tunis, culminated in the official launch of the “Carthage Declaration” comprehensive roadmap, to operationalize the "One Health" approach and forge a new path for collaborative health governance. The landmark event, held on June 14th and 15th, was co-organized by the World Bank and the Quadripartite powers of global health: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).



Laying the Foundation for Unified Action

The first day of the conference set a powerful tone of unified commitment, opening with inaugural addresses from Tunisian government leaders, including H.E. Mustapha Ferjani, Minister of Health and Conference President, alongside the directors-general and senior representatives of the WHO, WOA, FAO, UNEP, and the World Bank.



Discussions throughout the day built a compelling case for a paradigm shift in public health. A keynote address by Dr. Ekhlas Hailat, a MENA representative on the One Health High-Level Expert Panel, detailed the core principles of the approach. Subsequent panels explored

practical strategies for implementation, with "One Health in Action" sessions showcasing integrated surveillance systems and resilient laboratory networks. An inspiring "One Health Success Stories" dialogue, featuring Dr. Nissaf Ben Alaya of the Tunisia National Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases and Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET), highlighted the tangible benefits of cross-border collaboration. The conference addressed the critical issue of sustainable investment, with a keynote on the Pandemic Fund by its Executive Head, Dr. Priya Basu.



The second day translated the momentum from expert discussions into a concrete political commitment. The day's sessions culminated in the official launch of the Carthage Declaration, the primary outcome of the two-day summit. Presented by H.E. Mustapha Ferjani, the declaration signifies a major political consensus among the participating nations to move from dialogue to decisive, coordinated action.

Key pillars of this ambitious regional roadmap include:

- Establishing robust, integrated surveillance systems to detect health threats at the human-animal-environment interface.
- Promoting joint risk assessments and coordinated response mechanisms.
- Harmonizing policies and regulations related to food safety, animal health, and environmental protection.

Tunisia's Leadership in Action

Underscoring its leadership, Tunisia reinforced the regional declaration by presenting its own comprehensive national "One Health" roadmap for 2024-2026. This detailed plan outlines concrete national objectives, including the establishment of inter-ministerial committees, the creation of a digital One Health data-sharing platform by 2026, and the development of harmonized investigation protocols for threats like Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and foodborne illnesses.



The National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology (INNTA) was invited to this conference due to its role as the lead institution for food safety, balanced nutrition, and promoting healthy initiatives. INNTA's AfriFoodLinks team was also present at the conference, further strengthening collaborations vital for building a healthier and more resilient future.

Conclusion: A United Front for a Healthier Future

The "One Health - Secure Future" conference in Tunis marks a pivotal moment for health security and collaborative action across the MENA region. By successfully launching the Carthage Declaration, participating nations have committed to a unified, interdisciplinary approach to tackling complex health challenges at the critical intersection of human, animal, and environmental well-being.

Tunisia's proactive leadership, exemplified by its comprehensive national "One Health" roadmap for 2024-2026, sets a powerful precedent for regional cooperation.