Pioneering veterinary non governmental organization in promoting the effective collaborative, early warning detection, prevention and control of emerging zoonotic diseases in Nigeria

Babalobi OO (1) and Tomori. O (2)

(1) Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
(2) Vice-Chancellor, Redeemer's University, Lagos Nigeria

The Community Animal and Human Health Development Initiative CAHDI- Nigeria is a Veterinary Non Governmental Organization (NGO) whose vision for the formation arose on 15th December 2006 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia while the 1st author was attending the Second Forum for Pastoral Livelihoods in Complex Emergencies for developing global Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) http://www.livestock-emergency.net as the only participant invited from Nigeria. While so many veterinary NGO's existed and were invited from East and Central Africa, only one – the Senegal-based OXFAM Regional Office- was invited from West Africa. This challenge was expressed during the Forum's closing session, and the author was charged to initiate such NGO in Nigeria.

The initiative is also based on his academic and professional commitment to the Participatory Veterinary Epidemiology/ Community Based Animal Health Service concept which he teaches and research on at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as a Senior Lecturer (Pastoralism, Veterinary Epidemiology and Informatics) and Acting Head of Department (2008-2010) at the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

CAHDI is headed by Professor Oyewale Tomori, the Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University in Nigeria. Dr. Tomori worked as a Regional Virologist in Africa with the World Health Organization (WHO) for many years and is a virologist of international repute. Within the past 30 years, he has carried out meaningful research studies on a wide range of human viruses, and zoonotic and veterinary viruses, which are of immense public health importance in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The studies involve epidemiological and serological surveys for viral infections, the control of viral epidemics, the development of diagnostic tests for viral infections, the immunology of viruses, the pathology and pathogenesis of viruses, the development of viral vaccines, and characterization and ecology of viruses.

Prominent among the viruses he has studied are the Yellow fever virus, the Lassa fever virus, the poliomyelitis virus, the measles virus, the Ebola virus and a hitherto unknown virus, the Orungo virus, which he elucidated the properties of and registered with the International Committee of Virus Taxonomy, an outstanding contribution to virology.

Aims and Objectives of CAHDI-Nigeria among others include:

1. To create awareness and promote the acceptance of participatory, community based animal and human health development approaches
2. To contribute to cooperative Animal and Human relief efforts during times of disaster and disease outbreaks
3. To promote the "One Health, One Medicine" Approach to Animal and Human Disease prevention and control.

4. To promote routine prevention, control and surveillance of current and emerging zoonotic diseases in Nigeria and beyond.
5. To promote prompt and effective collaborative, early warning detection, prevention and control of emerging zoonotic diseases in Nigeria and beyond.