

## Feedback from the Regional Representation for Africa



Following the restrictive measures put in place in Mali for the control of COVID-19, the Regional Representative for Africa decided to give priority to working from home. In line with this, the representative requested the technical staff to follow the instructions provided by the HQ while working from home daily.

All the work offices of the representation were provided with hand sterilizer and the supporting staff and the security personnel received individual protective masks. Hand-washing equipment to be used by the OIE staff and visitors before entering the office has been installed at the entrance.

The supporting staff continues to clean premises (one staff per day) on a rotative basis, while the security personnel ensures the safeguard of the premises permanently.

All the technical staff are keeping contact through emails and phone calls. They are participating in virtual meetings, conferences, webinars through Zoom.

The regional representative is visiting the premises from time to time to undertake the following tasks:

- Meet with the accountant and the administrative assistant to discuss administrative matters and sign all the relevant documents;
- Ensure that the security and sanitary measures are in place.



In working from home each staff organised himself to provide the best service to the OIE and Member States. The representative is coordinating the OIE work in Africa through constant contact (via emails, phone calls, Zoom conference) with Sub-regional representatives for Northern, Eastern and Southern Africa and OIE delegates in West and Central Africa.

## A word from Karim Tounkara, Regional Representative for Africa (Bamako Office)

Lockdown: Transfer of work office to home. My tips to live with it!

Any change in our daily life, independent of our will, is lived essentially on the emotional and physical levels. Working from home, which is the new change in my life, is no exception to this rule. To live it better on the emotional level I accepted it psychologically and on the physical level I integrated it entirely into my daily life. It seems simple but it is not indeed. Below my contribution to live positively the lockdown:

### 1. How to accept the change on the psychological level:

Homework has temporarily imposed itself on humanity committed to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. Everybody must contribute to this commitment by adopting it entirely. Working at home means changing your workplace for a period not forever. It will end one day sooner or later. Seen from this angle, it is easily acceptable.

### 2. How to integrate it into daily life:

This part is very important and should be applied in detail.

- Create the same environment at home as in the office. For that my tips are:

- Having a real workspace in a place in the house that provides the conditions of tranquility and better intellectual concentration.
- Dress (with a very slight change, i.e. home shoes are fine) as if you were actually going to your usual work office.
- Be on time at your new workspace.
- Respect break times (as you were in work office) - coffee and lunch.
- Be concentrated and work exactly like you were at the work office.

- Create conditions for daily physical exercise after work. To do this, impose yourself a fixed time and duration. In my case walking inside my house for a duration of around one hour.



## A word from Oumar Al-Faroukh Idriss, Regional Coordinator PRAPS Animal Health Component

Personally, I don't like being at home on working days and even on public holidays and I have a hard time living with this semi-confinement situation linked to COVID-19. Besides, I'm not used to carry out office duties at home. I prefer staying in office until midnight and even on holidays to complete office work rather than working at home. I don't feel comfortable when I come home with office assignments.

Fortunately, what is characteristic of man is to be able to adapt to even the most difficult conditions. In addition, I also have pressure from my wife who would not want me to leave the house during this time of COVID-19 pandemic. Faced with all this I ended up abandoning my culture which says: 'nothing can happen to us if it is not already inscribed in us or the disease never kills, we die because the time of life inscribed in us by is finished'. So, I adapted to work well at home with three offices depending on the time of day:

- In the morning from 7.15am to 10am use of the ironing table as an office under the veranda;
- of the house (it is relatively cool in the morning (27–30°C with a little wind;
- 10am – 1pm: the dining table in the living room serves as my second desk;
- 2pm – 5 pm: the worktable in my daughter's room (my daughter is currently outside of Bamako), serves as my office during the heat period around 39–42°C (air-conditioned room located in shaded area and relatively cooler in this period).



Besides, I can't forget that the COVID-19, by starting to work at home, took away from me the walk of about 4.5 km that I used to do in the evening after leaving the office to go home, but above all the morning pleasure of seeing my work colleagues and support staff and shaking their hands and exchanging kind words before entering my office.

It is under these conditions that my work is done at home using the telephone, email and videoconferencing in accordance with the programming established following the COVID-19.

### **A word from Hassane Elhadji ADAKAL, Training Officer PRAPS Animal Health Component**

In my previous research career, working from home has always been necessary in order to deal with my office duties, spending less time with the family.



When I joined the OIE in May 2018, I made it a point to avoid working at home as much as possible, and I did not even set up a dedicated workspace in order to not be tempted to use my laptop. The situation imposed by Covid-19, followed by measures taken by OIE Headquarters and then by the RRA, led me to convert the children's study room into my office. I then divide my time between following up my own activities, teleconferences, accompanying the children to follow their lessons and other exercises. During breaks, I improvise myself as a babysitter or chef cook.

Thank you Covid for reconnecting us to the family and to life simply and differently!

### **A word from Cyrus Nersy, International Technical Assistant PRAPS Animal Health Component**

Regarding my own activities and apart from the pay missions that have been suspended since mid-February,

working from home in principle does not significantly impact all of my design and support / advice activities which may be do on request countries by email or direct contact (WhatsApp or Skype or Viber). This is how I stayed in contact with most of collaborators in the countries, particularly for the formulation of the animal health part of a possible PRAPS II. The latest videoconferencing tools also make it easy to participate in all meetings organised by the World Bank or OIE Headquarters. However, staying at home still saves me a minimum of 1h30 of journey per day which allows me exceptionally to take a daily walk with my 11-month-old baby.

### **A word from Brice Lafia, One Health Technical Coordinator**

I quickly adapted to this new situation by reorganising my daily programme. So, I have to balance working at home and tutoring my children (6 and 9 years old) who are also confined. I've never had so much direct interaction with colleagues from different departments at HQ before. Outside of work, and because of the restrictions, I occupy my free time between physical activities, including cycling in the woods (Sotuba forest) at 40°C in the early evening and board games with my family. A puzzle of 1000 pieces is waiting to be assembled because it is eager for time and concentration.



*We wish to thank our colleagues from the RR Africa for submitting this article to the OIE News Team.*

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