

Transitions in Senior Management at the World Organisation for Animal Health



Montserrat Arroyo, Deputy Director General, International Standards and Science (DDG-ISS) and Matthew Stone, Consultant, SPADE Solutions, co-authored this article for In-house Times.

This article introduces readers to changes in senior management at the Organisation, with reflections from Dr Arroyo as she becomes DDG-ISS and from Dr Stone as he leaves the role after five years.

Introducing the new DDG-ISS - Dr Montserrat Arroyo

The last several months seem to have been a never-ending roll out of transitions and adaptations, and I guess when I say this, most of us think about COVID. Me, I am reflecting on our transitions within the OIE, from our virtual work to our hybrid work, from pilot projects to fully fledged global programmes, from saying goodbye to some colleagues to welcoming new ones. These transitions have also come to the Deputy Directorate for International Standards and Science (DDISS). This past month I've been accompanied by Matthew in further learning his views and joining him in conversations with the different DDISS teams. I have been reviewing ongoing projects and workstreams, which have also evolved as lessons were learnt and as a result of constant reviews to ensure improvement. Most of all, I have been trying to absorb as much as possible from Matthew's vast experience in leading the Deputy Directorate for more than five years, and for this I am grateful to him and his legacy in leaving the strong and hard-working professional teams of the DDISS.

Philosopher Alan W. Watts says that,

'the only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it and join the dance'.

Reflecting on the past month I guess we have all been doing this, and for the near future, I sincerely hope we keep doing so, to maintain this momentum, enthusiasm and professionalism, in order to deliver on the 7th Strategic Plan. I chose this reference because the reality is that we will continue transitioning, becoming a more mature and bigger organisation, committing to and delivering ever more ambitious projects. Therefore, we need to keep changing, adapting, and working together... and enjoy the process in the interim. I am lucky in that I have known the OIE for more than 15 years both from the outside and the inside. I have seen it transition and have taken part in several different roles: as member of a Veterinary Services Delegation, as Focal Point, as staff, as Sub-regional Representative, as Department Head of two different departments, and now as Deputy Director. Throughout this evolution, the one constant has been change. I joined the DDISS this month, and for this latest change I hope it translates into me being able to support colleagues to keep moving towards more integrated transversal teams, furthering and defining our science system in support of our overall activities, evolving in our management of data within the whole of the OIE, thus enabling us to achieve our mission together.

Reflecting on the previous five years and a change in role for the outgoing role holder – Dr Matthew Stone

I've been thinking a lot about the changes in the OIE over my time of involvement. Change is essential in this fast-paced world. Either you change or you wither, and likely die. We cannot let that happen to the OIE, because its role in the global multilateral system is so important. That has been emphasised by recent events, with our warnings over many years about emerging zoonotic disease risks, the importance of surveillance and response systems, and capability and capacity needs in Veterinary Services being exposed as prescient in such a dramatic fashion with SARS-CoV-2.

As a Delegate, a member of the Regional Commission Bureau, and then as a staff member at OIE Headquarters, I have expanded my understanding of the OIE, its mandate and the challenges it faces serving its Members in collaboration with international and regional partners. In 2016, OIE Director General Dr Monique Éloit began her first mandate and recognised that these challenges involved a greater empowerment of a rapidly growing internal staff through improved clarity and direction within internal systems serving a growing number of strategies and programmes. All OIE programmes, including those initiated at the Organisation because of support from World Bank partners, require anchoring in the OIE mandate through application of the institutional mechanisms described in the Basic Texts and various terms of reference found there, through Resolutions of the World Assembly, and through documented strategies. We must continue to refine and optimise our mechanisms to engage our expert networks in Specialist Commissions, Working Groups and ad hoc Groups, and through formulating networks amongst Reference Centres. The internal systems that implement strategies and programmes require standard operating procedures (SOPs) and supporting information systems and tools. Strategies and programmes require clarity in long-, medium- and short-term objectives, translated into operational planning, with monitoring and evaluation embedded. With the dedication of Heads of Departments and Units, and staff working across the Organisation, a lot has been achieved to develop this internal clarity, though a lot remains to be done. At times it's been confusing and messy, but when I look back at what has been achieved and the changes to internal operations, I can say that OIE is definitely on the right track.

I wish Dr Éloit, Dr Arroyo, the Heads of Departments and Units at Headquarters, the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations, the Specialist Commission and Working Group members and other contributing experts from across our community, and all the staff at the OIE all the best in continuing this important work. To our Members and partners, I thank you for your support and your ongoing commitment to working with the OIE on our common objectives, since these are critical to moving towards the Sustainable Development Goals, to stabilising the climate and biodiversity crises, and to protecting livelihoods and economic prosperity.

I am very grateful to have been invited by Dr Éloit to support and contribute to her vision during her first mandate. I look forward to continuing to serve the OIE however I can, including being a strong and life-long advocate of the fundamental importance of our Organisation.

We wish to thank Montserrat Arroyo and Matthew Stone for writing this article for In-house Times.

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