CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Rising global demand for food has led to exponential growth in aquaculture worldwide, especially in the Americas, where production growth over the past ten years reached 22% – the world’s highest recorded increase;

2. Increasing demand for intensive aquaculture production systems increases the disease risk of such animals;

3. According to the answers to the questionnaire, less than half of the competencies recommended by the OIE are covered by either initial veterinary education or continuing education in the area of aquatic animal health in Member Countries in the region;

4. According to the answers to the questionnaire, more than half the Member Countries (51.8%) believe that Aquatic Animal Health Services do not have the skills required to control aquatic animal diseases; and

5. It is vital to strengthen the capacity of Veterinary Services, including the education of veterinarians based on the minimum competencies recommended by the OIE, given that veterinarians and animal health professionals from Aquatic Animal Health Services are responsible for the early detection of and rapid response to aquatic animal diseases.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries in the region include among their priorities the strengthening of initial and continuing veterinary education for aquatic animal health professionals, taking into account the OIE recommendations on the competencies of graduating veterinarians (Day 1 graduates’) and the OIE guidelines on a veterinary education core curriculum;

2. Member Countries in the region establish minimum requirements for the continuing education of professionals working in public and private Veterinary Services in the area of aquatic animal health, based on the OIE recommendations on the basic competencies;

3. Member Countries in the region improve communication among themselves in the area of aquatic animal health by such means as strengthening the Inter-American Committee on Aquatic Animal Health and strengthening the current regional network of National Focal Points for aquatic animals;

4. Member Countries in the region conduct simulation exercises to address emergency prevention, preparedness, and response to aquatic animal diseases;

5. Member Countries seek opportunities for undertaking Twinning projects relevant to Aquatic Animal Health;

6. Member Countries take advantage of the publication of the first edition of OIE PVS Tool: Aquatic (2013) to request PVS evaluation missions of Aquatic Animal Health Services;
7. The OIE continue to support Member Countries in the region through the OIE PVS Pathway, including for Aquatic Animal Health Services, and make any relevant adjustments to the OIE PVS Tool: Aquatic, in light of experience gained from evaluating the Aquatic Animal Health Services of some Member Countries;

8. The OIE strengthen the training of National Focal Points for aquatic animals in the area of veterinary education;

9. The OIE continue to support capacity-building of Member Countries in the region in the area of aquatic animal health via the training programme for Focal Points for aquatic animals and prioritise the competencies least covered, which were identified when analysing the answers to the questionnaire such as: risk analysis; organisation of Veterinary Services; pharmaceuticals, certification procedures, and communication skills;

10. The OIE promote the importance of veterinary education at the forthcoming OIE Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health, to be held in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) on 20-22 January 2015; and

11. The creation of an OIE Collaborating Centre for veterinary education on aquatic animal health in the region, with the ability to organise training courses, be considered. As well, to better use the existing OIE Collaborating Centres of the region, such as those dedicated to the capacity building of the Veterinary Services.
CONSIDERING THAT

1. The OIE main mandate is to adopt standards and make recommendations on the prevention, detection, notification, control and eradication of diseases of importance to animal health, veterinary public health and trade, including zoonoses;

2. The challenges that Member countries face in achieving the eradication of transboundary animal diseases from the national territory and that the failure of one country to control disease presents a risk not only to countries in the region but also to the global community;

3. No country can exclude the entry of wild birds carrying avian influenza viruses and it may be very difficult, in certain situations, to eradicate diseases such as CSF, ASF and some aquatic animal diseases from wild animal populations. For diseases that have wildlife reservoirs, compartmentalisation can be used among others to mitigate the disease risks that arise from the exposure of domestic and captive wild animals to wild populations;

4. The globalisation of trade, the intensification of animal and human movements, climate change and other environmental and socioeconomic factors contribute to the spread of pathogens and vectors worldwide;

5. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Code (Terrestrial Code) and the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Code (Aquatic Code) set out standards for the quality of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services;

6. The Terrestrial Code and the Aquatic Code indicate that the establishment of an animal sub-population of defined, favourable health status (using the concepts of zoning or compartmentalisation) is a tool in the prevention and control of diseases and can also be used to facilitate international trade in countries that experience disease outbreaks or endemic diseases situation;

7. A majority of Member Countries have made a strong commitment to strengthening the capacities of national Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services by inviting the OIE to make an independent evaluation of quality using the OIE PVS Tool and that the PVS Tool includes Critical Competencies on the use of zoning and compartmentalisation;

8. The OIE grants official recognition of free country or zones in the case of foot and mouth disease, african horse sickness, peste des petits ruminants, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and classical swine fever, as well as risk status for bovine spongiform encephalopathy; and has developed procedures for self-declaration of disease free compartments;

9. While zoning is used rather commonly, but the use of compartmentalisation is less common and exporting countries generally face difficulties to obtain the recognition of compartments by trading partners for the purposes of international trade;
10. The Region of the Americas has been very actively involved in the use of zoning and compartmentalisation in comparison with other OIE Regions;

11. Compartmentalisation is potentially relevant to all species but to date the use of compartments has mainly been in poultry and swine production and it is rarely used in aquatic animals; and

12. The veterinary legislation of many Member Countries does not currently recognise the concept of compartmentalisation for domestic purposes nor for international trade (importation and exportation).

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries consider the use of compartmentalisation as a trade facilitating measure and as a tool to safeguard animal health through improved biosecurity and to reduce the likelihood and impact of disease outbreaks in infected countries as well as in countries free of specific diseases;

2. Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services increase collaboration with the private sector, including the livestock and aquaculture sectors, and promote the sharing of information on disease prevention and control, including the results of applied research, so to facilitate compartmentalisation;

3. Governments review the national veterinary legislation as appropriate and establish a legal framework, based on standards and guidelines of the OIE, for the use of compartmentalisation within the country and for the recognition of compartments established in the country and by trading partners;

4. Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services involve the private sector in the development and revision of animal health programmes, including consideration of the possible use of compartmentalisation;

5. In order to support the implementation of compartmentalisation, the Veterinary Authority and the Competent Authority for aquatic animal health ensure that they have legal authority to accredit or provide specific delegation of legal powers to private veterinarians, aquatic health professionals and diagnostic laboratories according to OIE standards and guidelines;

6. Member Countries of the Region of the Americas contribute to improve global knowledge on compartmentalisation by sharing information on experiences and best practices in its use;

7. Member countries continually strive to maintain and strengthen their Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services, including through participation in the OIE PVS Pathway for Terrestrial and Aquatic sectors, as a basis to support the negotiation of export markets using zoning, compartmentalisation and other approaches endorsed by the OIE;

8. Member Countries and regional organisations consider a harmonised approach to the use of compartmentalisation as a mean to promote the recognition from trading partners;

9. The OIE encourage the use by Member Countries of compartmentalisation, including by sharing information on their experiences on the use of this tool via publication in the OIE Bulletin and on the OIE website;
10. The OIE make provision for expanded uses of compartmentalisation, by
   • including the concept in individual disease chapters in the *Terrestrial Code* (as appropriate);
   • the development of new approaches (e.g. the application of compartmentalisation to artificial breeding establishments and competition horses);
   • providing more guidance on its implementation in the aquatic sector;

11. The OIE continue its work of supporting Member Countries by means of programmes such as the evaluation of performance of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services using the OIE PVS Tool, and other mechanisms and initiatives identified in the PVS Pathway, especially in the context of compartmentalisation; and

12. The OIE continue to organise capacity building programmes directed to Delegates and National Focal Points and include compartmentalization in some of the programmes.