

## Bioterrorism threat looms with rising epidemics: WHO

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**Singapore:** With vector borne and animal diseases wreaking havoc worldwide, the World Health Organization, animal health and national defense officers called on for a wider international cooperation to check on the spread of animal diseases that could be used as biological weapons for bioterrorism.

In a recent conference on bio threat reduction, officials said that advances in genetics also have many negative impacts on the society as these tools can be used to effectively target a large population in the form of epidemics. Hence, member nations must come together and increase investments on biosecurity, stressed WHO.

Mr Bernard Vallat, director general of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), said, "Sixty percent of human diseases come from animal agents and 80 percent of the agents that could be used for bio terrorism are of animal origin."

"Terrorists have clearly shown they will use any weapons at their disposal," said, Mr Kenneth Myers, director of the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), part of the Department of Defense, noting that disease agents are easy to transport and difficult to detect.

Mr Vallat further mentioned, "History has shown that animal diseases have often been used as weapons before. International solidarity is key because any country that does not implement standards can be a threat to the entire planet."