

## **Background Paper**

### **3.4 d Ensuring intergovernmental support to national and other stakeholders for integrated action to tackle HPAI and prepare for the next influenza pandemic**

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#### **Summary**

The challenge of responding to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry, reducing the likelihood of human infection with H5N1, and preparing for the next influenza pandemic is being addressed across government as an integrated issue in many countries. The threats posed by HPAI and the next influenza pandemic have to be tackled by all countries working together as infectious viral pathogens do not respect national borders. Events and actions in any one country affect the risks faced by all other countries. International intergovernmental partnerships on avian and pandemic influenza were initiated during 2005 to provide a political impetus for joint action by different nations in response to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic. Several regional intergovernmental political initiatives have also been initiated. All intergovernmental meetings since 2005 have requested that external support for national actions be both strategic and well coordinated. The responsible international institutions were asked to develop an integrated strategy for responding to the threat of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic on a global scale and did so at a partners' meeting in Geneva November 2005 with a series of broad principles attached to evidence-based strategies for responding to HPAI and pandemic preparedness.

The strategic focus of the November 2005 partners' meeting was on the livestock and health sector outcomes required at country level, and the support to be provided through UN system specialized agencies and the OIE. The institutional arrangements and framework for financial support to integrated national programmes were agreed in January 2006: bilateral donors, the European Commission and multilateral development banks pledged a total of US\$1,834 million as external assistance for country, regional and global functions. Despite the generous pledges made in Beijing, insufficient funds were available for some countries to make urgent responses to new outbreaks of HPAI in poultry and cases of H5N1 being transmitted from birds to humans. Increased demands were being made of the UN specialized agencies at this time and additional financial and human resource support was sought. The intergovernmental political partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) agreed to review progress at a senior officials' meeting in Vienna in June 2006 with a particular focus on assessing the HPAI situation, reviewing pandemic risk, communication of information and coordination of external assistance. A further intergovernmental review of progress in December 2006 in Bamako, Mali revealed that funds pledged during the Beijing meeting were committed comparatively quickly during 2005-2006.

Countries responding effectively to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic in 2006 pursued the core elements of principles agreed at the partners' meeting of November 2005 and subsequent strategies deriving from them by UN System agencies and their partners: six additional factors were identified as key to the success of national action against HPAI. Experiences during 2007 confirm that these factors need to be pursued jointly by governments, as partners, if the global dimensions of the HPAI epizootic, of H5N1 infections in humans and the potential of a human influenza pandemic are to receive the attention they require. Sustaining political commitment for a concerted response to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic has not been easy. There is a need for effective work among and within governments to ensure that Government Departments responsible for livestock and human health within individual countries work together efficiently and effectively at local and national levels and that this work is aligned with international standards. Without the perception of adequate incentives for intergovernmental cooperation the degree of joint work between governments with regard to both responses to HPAI threats and to pandemic preparedness may yet be insufficient. The UN System Influenza Coordinator and the World Bank will continue to track the extent of intergovernmental consensus as well as the ways in which funds pledged in Beijing and Bamako are being used, and will, by August 2007, have assessed the extent to which there are still

serious shortcomings in national, regional or global responses to the current epizootic of HPAI and the threat of an influenza pandemic. Findings of this work will help inform those responsible for developing intergovernmental positions and shaping the way forward for responding to the global threats of HPAI in poultry and an influenza pandemic.

### **Description of Processes for Inter-Governmental Support**

1 The challenge of responding to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry, reducing the likelihood of human infection with H5N1, and preparing for the next influenza pandemic is being addressed across government as an integrated issue in many countries. During 2005 continuing reports of human deaths due to from H5N1 infection in humans linked to the pervasive spread of HPAI in poultry led an increasing number of governments to recognize the potential for H5N1 to cause the next influenza pandemic, and for such a pandemic to cause major suffering and massive economic and social damage on a global scale. Countries responding to the challenges of HPAI and preparing for the next human pandemic have started to see them as cross-government issues, not just the concern of health and livestock ministries. They also see these challenges as inter-government issues: one country alone cannot mitigate the global impacts of a pandemic that will know no national borders. Heads of government are engaged and prime ministers' offices lead interdepartmental influenza committees.

2 The threats posed by HPAI and the next influenza pandemic have to be tackled by all countries working together. In facing up to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic, joint working by different nations is vital: this usually involves the foreign ministries of each government, as well as the ministries responsible for health and livestock, engaging together at regional and global events: the UN and other international bodies are frequently brought in. The political dimension of influenza has become a reality and the way the political commitments influence technical policy and programme choices has been examined from regional and global perspectives at intergovernmental ministerial meetings and summits.

3 Intergovernmental partnerships on avian and pandemic influenza were initiated during 2005 to provide a political impetus for joint action by different nations in response to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic. The US-sponsored International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza invited partners to agree on 10 principles for joint working, including transparency on information and samples: an IPAPI meeting was held in Washington DC early in October 2005. Canada also took a global political initiative hosting Ministers of Health towards the end of October. Subsequent intergovernmental meetings reflected an evolution of the IPAPI concept, and though no formal partnership was created, there was a consistent political support for key outcomes within countries and within international agencies and financial institutions. The latter included the coordinated provision of technical, institutional and financial support to national and regional responses between 2005 and 2007.

4 Several regional intergovernmental political initiatives have also been initiated. For example officials in APEC economies have worked on an action plan for ensuring that their economies continue to function during an influenza pandemic: this was requested by their Ministers of Health during 2006. Ministers from European Union countries have encouraged a joint approach within their member countries and sought to coordinate provision of external assistance through the European Commission.

5 Political events requested that external support for national actions be both strategic and well coordinated. As intergovernmental political engagement deepened during 2005, governments requested international bodies to coordinate both global standard setting and monitoring, and their technical and financial responses to country needs and crisis preparedness. The UN system and development banks were requested to monitor and analyze progress in relation to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic.

6 The responsible international institutions were asked to develop an integrated strategy for responding to the threat of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic on a global scale and did so at a partners' meeting in Geneva November 2005 with a series of broad principles attached to evidence-based strategies for responding to HPAI and pandemic preparedness. FAO, OIE, WHO and the World Bank hosted this meeting to secure strategic consensus on the principal elements of national efforts to control HPAI and prepare for the next influenza pandemic. The main

emphasis was on the technical approach for responding to HPAI in birds, especially in poultry, for prevention of human H5N1 infection and for pandemic containment. The need for technical strategies for (a) communication and mobilization of community-level action, (b) responding to social, economic, humanitarian and equity implications of a pandemic, and (c) managing financial and technical support to countries, was identified also at the meeting and received more detailed attention during 2006.

7 The strategic focus of the partners' meeting in Geneva was on the livestock and health sector outcomes required at country level, and the support to be provided through UN system specialized agencies and the OIE. Countries were encouraged to design integrated national avian and human influenza programmes. Bilateral donor agencies, the European Commission, together with the World Bank and regional development banks indicated that they would mobilize funds for urgent support to countries, as well as funds for the global and regional functions of the specialized agencies. The World Bank's adaptable programme loan arrangement for developing and then securing grant and loan finance for national avian and human influenza programmes was devised towards the end of 2005. The World Bank also proposed a facility through which donors could contribute to a fund that would offer grants in support of these country programmes.

8 The institutional arrangements and framework for financial support to integrated national programmes were presented and agreed to in January 2006 at an intergovernmental senior officials' meeting in Beijing. This meeting reviewed the resources that countries would require given the distribution of avian influenza at that time and the needs for national pandemic preparedness efforts. A strategy for the UN system's contribution was devised at this time, and several governments started work on developing their national programmes. Bilateral donor agencies, the European Commission and development banks pledged a total of US\$1,834 million as external assistance for country, regional and global functions. The agreed financing framework called for the design of national programmes using an agreed template, joint appraisal of programme documents by government and donor representatives, appraisal of national programme documents followed by a financing conference at country level at which donors and government would be able to agree the priorities for financial support and then which donor would contribute and what activities they would support. Out of the total of \$1,834 million pledged, approximately US\$1 billion was as grants, and US\$0.9 billion was as loans. The Beijing funding was pledged at a time when 15 countries were affected by HPAI: it was geared primarily to the needs of Asian countries. However, shortly after the meeting had taken place, initial outbreaks in Nigeria were being reported, and by the end of 2006, 55 countries were affected.

9 Despite the generous pledges made in Beijing, insufficient funds were available for some countries to make urgent responses to new outbreaks of HPAI in poultry and cases of H5N1 being transmitted from birds to humans. As H5N1 spread rapidly into the Middle East, Eastern Europe, South Asia and Africa during early 2006, UN systems agencies were called upon for rapid technical assistance with immediate responses to HPAI outbreaks in poultry and for strengthening national health systems in the face of human H5N1 cases. The complexity of - and thus time needed to develop and appraise - programmes for long term build-up of veterinary services, poultry vaccination, restructuring of the poultry industry, human public health services, and public information systems became clear. In March 2006 a small meeting of donors, UN systems agencies and World Bank personnel recognized that more funds would be needed, over a much longer time period, and backed by more intensive technical assistance than had been predicted in the Beijing meeting. It was agreed that for countries with very limited national implementation capacity, special arrangements for direct support with programme implementation (eg through UN agencies) might well be needed to supplement the national response.

10 Increased demands were being made of the UN specialized agencies at this time and additional financial and human resource support was sought. Urgent requests went out for (a) donors to make good on pledges, (b) a special capacity in the FAO that would permit responses to urgent requests for livestock sector assistance, (c) more support to WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response network, and (d) backing for UNICEF's capacity to disseminate information as part of mobilizing societies to take actions that would reduce risk and improve security in the face of HPAI threats. The most immediate results were (a) the establishment of FAO's Crisis

Management Centre in Rome and its Emergency Centre for Trans-boundary Animal Diseases in Bangkok, (b) intensified support to countries through the African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR) – which started with an assessment of resource needs in Africa, (c) rapid implementation of the UNICEF programme of communication support for social mobilization and action on HPAI and human H5N1 infection, and (d) a consolidated plan for the UN system contribution to both national and global responses to avian and human influenza threats.

11 Immediately after Beijing, plans were laid for a follow-up political meeting (at Senior Officials level) in June hosted by the Government of Austria (as president of the European Union) and the European Commission to review progress with a particular emphasis on communication of information, financial flows and political issues. The UN and the World Bank presented their first progress reports to track both financial flows and (as far as the data would permit) outcomes - as reflected in better functioning livestock and human health programs and changes in the risks of HPAI outbreaks and human H5N1 infections.

12 At the suggestion of the European Commission, a further review meeting was organized by the African Union with EC support and hosted by the Government of Mali in Bamako, Mali, December 2006. The emphasis was on financial and other requirements for effective prevention and control of HPAI as well as for pandemic preparedness in the continent of Africa and in countries within which HPAI in poultry was endemic. Funds of the order of US\$493 million were pledged, part of which went to the UN System, in particular FAO, WHO and UNICEF. A further progress report was prepared and this showed that as of October 31, 2006, donors reported commitments of US\$1,359 million (equivalent to 74 percent of the amount pledged), of which US\$742 million (equivalent to 55 percent of the amount committed) had been disbursed. Out of these commitments, US\$509 million (38%) was in direct support of country programmes, US\$75 million (6%) was being channeled to countries through AHI Facility, US\$240 million (18%) was for international organizations, and the remaining 39% was for regional organizations and other activities. Data obtained from countries confirmed that there had been considerable improvements in the overall performance of animal health and human public health services especially in Asia.

13 During 2006 UN and WB analysis, it became clear that as well as pursuing the core elements of principles agreed in November 2005 and subsequent strategies deriving from them by UN System agencies and their partners, six additional factors are key to effective implementation of national HPAI control strategies at country level.

- a) Strong and sustained Prime Ministerial and/or Presidential commitment to, and engagement in, implementation of an integrated strategy for HPAI control, prevention of human H5N1 infection and influenza pandemic preparedness
- b) Capacity for a surge in responses to suspected HPAI outbreaks and to suspicions of human-to-human transmission of a potential pandemic virus (with operating procedures, trained personnel stocks of essential commodities and the necessary finance to cover costs)
- c) Effective joint working between government departments responsible for livestock and human health (including the sharing of data and analyses and joint responses) at local, regional and national levels;
- d) Incentives for livestock producers – whether engaged in large commercial operations or keeping small backyard flocks – and human health professionals to seek to prevent disease, to report outbreaks promptly and to control disease effectively (eg movement restrictions and/or culling of poultry)
- e) Effective engagement of civil society and private sector in the control of HPAI and preparations for the next pandemic
- f) Intensive communication on best practice on avian influenza and pandemic preparedness so as to mobilize both the general public and specific target groups (e.g. commercial poultry farmers and, small-scale farms)

## **Analysis of current intergovernmental support for effective responses to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic**

14 Experiences during 2007 have confirmed the importance of the six success factors, but revealed the absolute need for these factors to be pursued in synergy by groups of countries as well as within individual countries. This requires long term political support for joint working through intergovernmental political processes (global and regional), surge capacity that works across national borders, with complete transparency with regard to data, incentives that bring benefits to countries that work well together, full engagement of the private sector and civil society, and global communications that disseminate up to date and correct messages to all (with a particular focus on the risk of disease reaching humans from the animal kingdom). The international community is asked to provide technical (and appropriate financial) support for synergized multi-country action in these areas.

15 Sustaining political commitment for a concerted response to the threats of HPAI and the next influenza pandemic through into 2007 has not been easy and a strong and well-supported intergovernmental political process is critical. Preference (for 2007 at least) is a rhythm of annual progress review and policy meetings at the end of each year, supplemented by a review of strategies being pursued, ways in which implementation is supported and their overall effectiveness in the middle of the year. It is important that adequate information is available to serve as a basis for the reviews, and that unresolved political issues (eg on equity of access to key commodities, to funds or to technical assistance) are brought to these events. Governments have started to recognize that preparedness for the next influenza pandemic contributes to preparedness for other threats to health security and to major transnational crises.

16 There is an need for effective intragovernmental work to ensure that government departments responsible for livestock and human health within individual countries work together efficiently and effectively (and share data and analyses) at local and national levels – and intergovernmental support is needed to ensure that their work aligns with international standards and that the work is adequately resourced in poor countries. Veterinary and human health professionals seek international standards for joint working on protocols for the prevention of disease, for reporting outbreaks promptly and for controlling diseases effectively (eg movement restrictions and/or culling of poultry). Actions to promote better human and animal health need to progress together: this is not easy given the historical divides between these two communities globally as well as nationally.

17 Without the perception of adequate incentives for intergovernmental cooperation the degree of joint work between governments with regard to both responses to HPAI threats and to pandemic preparedness may not be sufficient both to control the current HPAI panzootic and to withstand the extreme consequences of the next influenza pandemic. While individual governments have looked hard at potential incentives for ensuring that those who produce poultry participate in HPAI control measures, and for health professionals to implement improved public health systems, national authorities from different countries are starting to question whether there are sufficient incentives for them to work together on different dimensions of HPAI control and pandemic preparedness.

### **Conclusion**

18 In conclusion, the UN System Influenza Coordinator and the World Bank will continue to track what is being done with the funds pledged in Beijing and Bamako, and will assess the extent to which there are still serious shortcomings in national, regional or global responses to the current epizootic of HPAI and the threat of an influenza pandemic. Their next progress report – to include an assessment of what additional resources may be required – is expected to be available during August 2007. The authors will look at what has been achieved with the funds that have already been disbursed, the reasons why committed funds have yet to be spent, the extent to which new pledges have been committed, and whether there are specific aspects of the responses that are still under-funded. They will check that international technical agencies, regional bodies, and other organizations are adequately resourced to respond and that sufficient funds are being made available to ensure access to essential medicines and vaccines as part of pandemic readiness. Findings of this work will help inform those responsible for developing intergovernmental positions and shaping the way forward for responding to the global threats of HPAI in poultry and an influenza pandemic.