



Central Asian Roundtable Meeting on Avian Influenza Control and Human Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**Senior Officials' Meeting on
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
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**Central Asian Roundtable Meeting on
Avian Influenza Control and Human Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response**

Date: 12-13 June 2006

Venue: Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

Organized by: Inter-agency coordination on avian and pandemic influenza in Central Asia¹

Participants: Representatives of coordinating mechanisms and government technical agencies² of Central Asian and of neighboring countries responsible for the control of avian and human influenza, as well as multilateral and bilateral development agencies and UN system agencies³

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Contact: Mr. Yon Fleerackers (ADB Consultant / Infectious Disease Specialist)

&

Mrs. Leila Tuleshova
(ADB Consultant / Administrator)

Influenza Roundtable Conference Secretariat at:

Asian Development Bank 20A Kazibek Bi Street (Arai Building, 4 th floor.) 050010 Almaty Republic of Kazakhstan	Tel: +(7-3272) 918-513/27 Fax: +(7-3272) 918-762 Email: avianflumeeting@gmail.com
Republican Sanitary-Epidemiological Station Auezov St. 84 05008 Almaty Republic of Kazakhstan	Tel: (7-3272) 43 25 00 Fax: (7-3272) 77 65 58

¹ Asian Development Bank, European Commission, UNICEF, US-CDC, USAID, World Bank, World Health Organization -- *confirmed as of 3 April 2006*; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Food and Agriculture Organization, World Organization for Animal Health, United Nations System Influenza Coordination -- *invited but not confirmed as of 3 April 2006*.

² Such as Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Sanitary-Epidemiological Station (Central Asia and Russian Federation), Provincial Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (PRC), veterinary sanitary services, etc.

³ ADB, EC, ECDC, FAO, OIE, UNICEF, UNSIC, US-CDC, USAID, World Bank, WHO.

INTRODUCTION

Influenza is a zoonotic disease (animal to human transmission) of international importance because of its potential capacity to mutate in ways that would allow sustained human-to-human transmission. A new sub-type of influenza virus (known as H5N1) is currently causing large outbreaks in wild and domestic birds in Asia and Europe, creating widespread concern. The highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (H5N1), currently found in Asia, is causing severe socio-economic problems for poultry farmers. It poses an immediate and potentially severe threat to animal and human health.

- First, the spreading outbreak of animal disease (epizootic) jeopardizes agriculture and food industries, the livelihoods of smallholders, and food security. Since the first reports of H5N1 outbreaks in Asia in late 2003, nearly 140 million domestic poultry have been killed by the virus or destroyed to control its spread. Economic losses to the Asian poultry sector are estimated at around \$10 billion. Already, H5N1 is threatening livelihoods of hundreds of millions and seriously impeding regional and international trade.
- Second, H5N1 is continuing to cause sporadic human cases, with around half the confirmed cases dying from the infection.
- Third, the H5N1 virus may evolve into a form that is easily transmissible in humans. In such a case, the virus could lead to a global human influenza pandemic with catastrophic social and economic consequences.

DRAFT AGENDA

- Opening by government authorities
- Keynote speeches
- Update on epidemiological situation of avian influenza
- Lessons learned in outbreak investigation and response in the Central Asian Region and other countries (e.g., best practice)
- Activities carried out on avian influenza: (a) food safety and animal health issues; (b) measures implemented for animal health; (c) risk assessment for humans; (d) measures implemented for human health; (e) governance and legislation; (f) economic and social systems (health and agriculture systems); (g) communication and coordination.
- Activities carried out on pandemic preparedness in the region: (a) coordination of measures at regional level; (b) pandemic preparedness exercises; (c) state of preparedness of countries (including country assessments); (d) national pandemic preparedness exercises.
- Working group session on preparedness indicators, and interoperability of national plans
- Conclusions and recommendations

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BY INTERVENTION AREAS

- Global (expanded global anti-viral stockpile; global strategy for vaccine research and development; costing of country plans and regional and global requirements; finalize coordination framework building on existing mechanisms)
- Regional ('rapid response' teams of experts; stronger country and regional capacity; expanded network of influenza laboratories; multi-country technical networks)
- Country and sub-national (development of integrated national plans; aggressive control of Avian Influenza in birds and human pandemic preparedness; assess needs of veterinary infrastructures; voluntary compliance of international health regulations)