

## ***ADB Update on Avian Flu Crisis, 30 January 2004***

**Countries affected:** At present, seven countries have reported cases of avian flu caused by the new H5N1 strain: Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Human cases have been reported only in Viet Nam (with 6 deaths) and in Thailand (with 2 deaths)<sup>1</sup>. Other countries or areas (such as Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, Pakistan, and Taipei, China) have reported recent outbreaks of avian flu but caused by different, more benign strains. No outbreak has been reported in the Philippines.

**ADB support:** As an initial response to the crisis, President Chino has written/is writing to DMCs affected by avian flu to express ADB's concern and willingness to provide assistance. A videoconference yesterday chaired by DG, MKRD brought together staff from the Department, Resident Missions, OER and RSDD to agree on immediate and longer-term responses for the Mekong region countries. As a next step, VRM is taking steps to purchase \$50,000 worth of essential supplies (e.g. protective clothing, sprayers) urgently needed, in coordination with WHO, and to present them to the government in the next few days as a contribution to their effort. Funding will come from a RETA<sup>2</sup>, which provides support for SARS and other infectious diseases.

In Lao PDR, a meeting took place yesterday between Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, FAO, WHO, EU (they have a vet who runs an Agriculture Health Center and has been involved in testing) and ADB met to discuss the crisis. VRM and CARM are also consulting with governments to encourage use of both RETA and loan funds to finance essential goods and services needed to combat this crisis. RSDD is working to ensure a coordinated ADB response to the crisis, and has drafted an information paper that is being finalized<sup>3</sup>.

**Other regional initiatives:** Following a Bangkok conference bringing together 12 governments, a joint ministerial statement on the situation issued Wednesday, 28 January, announced agreement to take the following steps<sup>4</sup>:

- Adopt more stringent surveillance and effective response systems, improve R&D and share information and technology
- Investigate options for designing more bio-security developments for small-scale poultry producers
- Implement measures to control bird flu in line with WHO, FAO and OIE recommendations
- Promote rapid warning of possible outbreaks
- Develop effective, low-cost diagnostic kits, vaccination and antiviral drugs

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<sup>1</sup> Source: WHO

<sup>2</sup> TA No. 6108, *Emergency Regional Support to Address the Outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome*, for \$2,000,000, approved on 23 May, 2003; with additional \$3,000,000, approved on 29 September 2003.

<sup>3</sup> "ADB Support For The Fight Against Emerging Infectious Diseases Including Avian Flu", draft.

<sup>4</sup> Source, *Wall Street Journal*, 29 January, 2004.

A separate regional meeting of livestock specialists took place yesterday in Bangkok. MKRD's Akmal Siddiq attended. Possible regional responses to the avian flu crisis were discussed, including a regional monitoring system.

**WHO's latest update (29 January 2004):**

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/country/cases\\_table\\_2004\\_01\\_29/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/country/cases_table_2004_01_29/en/)

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