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Head of Delegation

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**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA CONTROL AND HUMAN  
INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

**Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12-13 June 2006**

**SPEAKING ELEMENTS**

**By Adriaan van der Meer, Head of Delegation in Kazakhstan**

- I would like to welcome you all to this two day regional conference on avian flu preparedness, which will take place with the support of the European Commission, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, CAREC, USAID, CDC, and UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNSIC, WHO).
- As you know, the threat of avian influenza and the human influenza pandemic is a global challenge. The European Commission is working to help structure a global response.
- The EU has a number of legislative provisions in place to prevent and control avian influenza outbreaks in Europe. These measures are continually being updated to address new developments in the disease situation. All Member States have avian influenza contingency plans in place in case of an outbreak and the EU works closely with international partners such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on this issue.

- The EC pledge in Beijing was €100 million, of which €80 m was in direct support to third countries and €20m to increase the Commission's support of research into avian and pandemic influenza.
- After the Beijing Conference, the European Commission moved fast to mobilise funding to third countries. The Commission worked with the World Bank to set up a multi-donor trust fund, the Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) Facility
- The aim of the AHI fund is to assist transition countries in meeting financing gaps in their AHI-integrated country programmes to minimise the risk and socio-economic impact of avian and possible human pandemic influenza. The EC will be the biggest contributor to the fund, contributing: €30m in Asia, €5m in Eastern Europe, €5m in Central Asia and €10m in the Mediterranean. The Trust Fund has been operational since May 2006.
- On 6 and 7 June, the Austrian Presidency of the EU hosted a Senior Officials' Meeting on Avian and Pandemic Influenza in Vienna. The meeting was co-chaired by the Austrian Presidency, the EC, USA and PR of China, and the aim was to take stock of donor support since the Beijing Conference and reinforce strategic lines of action.
- I look forward to the discussions today and tomorrow, as I am sure that these will provide a valuable opportunity for all the countries in the region affected by the avian flu threat, both in terms of human and animal health, to exchange best practices, have a frank and open discussion about this common challenge, and to reach a consensus on priority actions for preventing an avian flu pandemic in this region.

Adriaan van der Meer  
Head of Delegation

