

BACKGROUND TO INTERNATIONAL INFLUENZA STRATEGY WORKSHOP

This note outlines the workshop's purpose, and gives brief factual background on the UK's current international activities in avian and pandemic influenza. It accompanies a briefing paper prepared by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

WORKSHOP AIMS, STRUCTURE AND OUTPUTS

The workshop is intended to identify options for UK international pandemic influenza strategy over the years from 2008 to 2013.

So as to maximise the free exchange of ideas, discussion will be held under the "Chatham House Rule". This means that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

To focus discussions a series of questions has been produced (see accompanying workshop questions paper). These cover four themes: the interoperability of plans; the major challenges of the next 3-5 years including development of the New Delhi Road Map; the roles and priority functions of international players; and the UK's role in funding and supporting international activities.

The questions are being pre-circulated to ensure that participants can reflect on them before the meeting and prepare any observations for discussion. The questions have been derived from analysis of current UK activities, the Vision and Road Map of New Delhi, and recent UNSIC / World Bank global progress reports. They have been formulated deliberately to stimulate thinking on the primary elements of good strategy across the four themes.

The discussions should therefore aim to identify priority strategic objectives, how they will be taken forward, the roles of international actors, functional processes, regulatory mechanisms, success indicators, and risks to success.

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine will facilitate each session. Rapporteurs will collate the results after the workshop. HMG will share the resulting report with all participants. These results will inform UK's strategy development work.

BACKGROUND ON THE UK'S CURRENT INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Current international strategies agreed globally in 2005 aim to prevent and eradicate H5N1 in poultry; to prevent and contain an emerging pandemic; and to respond effectively by mitigating and recovering rapidly from a pandemic. Complementing the national pandemic framework for domestic policy, the UK has to date addressed these international aims by a flexible approach which:

- i. supports a strong and effective multilateral system;
- ii. supports building rapid response capabilities, surveillance and reporting systems;
- iii. supports targeted building of animal husbandry and public health capacity; and
- iv. stimulates donor commitments and disbursements where needed.

Consistent with this approach, the UK, in addition to funds pledged through the European Commission, made a three-part pledge at the Beijing conference in January 2006: to deliver £20 million from DFID over three years through multilateral channels; to reprioritise DFID's country aid programmes if requested to do so by partner governments; and to provide significant technical resources through other Government Departments.

At the Bamako conference in December 2006, the UK pledged to increase the level of its overall effort to £30 million; and at the New Delhi conference in December 2007 the overall level of pledge was further raised to £35 million.

From the £20m pledge, DFID has already agreed to provide:-

- £7.0m to the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) Facility.
- £500,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' 2006 Avian Influenza Preparedness, Mitigation and Response appeal.
- £3.5m to the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- £3.5m for the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).
- £1.3m in technical support to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the UN System Influenza Coordinator (UNSIC).

The UK is therefore pursuing an essentially multilateral strategy, concentrating funding on those organisations with proven ability and capacity in the field of avian and human influenza. Moreover, given that the global public good of protecting against a pandemic requires a truly global and science-based approach to deploying resources, this also ensures that available resources are able to meet priority needs in a pragmatic and flexible manner.

Even where DFID has been in a position to reprioritise its bilateral programmes to focus on animal and human influenza projects (in China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda) this has been done on an essentially multilateral basis, primarily by contributing to national programmes devised by the FAO or WHO.

DFID has also agreed a research grant worth £3.9m to investigate pro-poor control strategies for avian influenza.

In-kind support includes £8.5m from UK centres of expertise as follows:

- From the UK Veterinary Laboratories Agency and State Veterinary Service on capacity development, preparedness planning and risk control.
- Support for early warning systems and wild bird surveillance.
- On human health, tests for clinical trials and of vaccine potency.
- Guidance and training modules in areas such as diagnosis and management of human influenza, preparedness exercises and scenario planning.
- Advice and training from other Government departments with specialist expertise, such as on border control.

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