

Appeal update

The International Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 183 countries.

Appeal number MAA00018

14 September 2006

AVIAN INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS, MITIGATION, AND RESPONSE

Special focus on Asia Pacific

In brief

Update no. 1, Period covered: April to August 2006;

Appeal launched on 20 April 2006 for CHF 17.4m (USD 13.4m or EUR 11m) for up to the end of 2007

Appeal coverage for 2006-2007: 12 %;

Outstanding needs: CHF 15.3m (USD 12.2m or EUR 9.7m).

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 691,000 (USD 531,000 or ERU 438,000)

([click here to go directly to the Contributions List on the website](#))([click here for full appeal document](#))

([click here for previous information bulletins on Red Cross and Red Crescent response in East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia](#))

Summary:

The human infections by avian influenza H5N1 continued to occur in the region, particularly in Southeast Asia during the last few months. Three-quarters of human cases of avian influenza H5N1 reported worldwide so far are in Southeast Asia, with the total cumulative number of confirmed cases standing at 186. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia Pacific region, with their unique local networks and support from the International Federation, are reinforcing or scaling up preparedness, mitigation and response efforts in coordination with their governments.

This update is being issued for information on measures that Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in Asia and Pacific are taking in response to the increasing threats of avian influenza to humans, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. A number of national societies have submitted proposals to access funds available from this global avian flu appeal.

Given the potential magnitude and unprecedented nature of the threat posed by avian influenza and its possible conversion into pandemic influenza (PI) with disastrous consequences, the Federation is committed to using its comparative global advantages to support increased efforts by its member national societies to develop and implement successful measures leading to a viable risk-reduction and relevant national and global response capacity to AI and pandemic influenza. With only 12% appeal coverage to date, a further CHF 15.3 million is needed to implement this appeal.



For further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please visit the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org> <click here for contact details>

The Situation

South-East Asia

To date, several Southeast Asian countries have reported H5N1 outbreaks in poultry: Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. Both Cambodia and Viet Nam have recently reported outbreaks among birds after several months of inactivity. In August, Viet Nam reported cases among backyard farm ducks in three provinces, the first outbreak to occur in the nation's domestic poultry this year. In Cambodia, avian influenza H5N1 also has reappeared in poultry after several months of no reported cases. According to the Royal Government of Cambodia, the disease killed more than 1,300 ducks in Prey Veng province, in the south of the country, bordering Viet Nam. The situation in Indonesia remains serious: the H5N1 virus is considered endemic in 27 of its 33 provinces. With an estimated two billion chickens in the country, there is a serious threat to humans from infected animals.



Getting the avian flu message out: People read all about it in Viet Nam.

Three-quarters of human cases of avian influenza H5N1 reported worldwide so far are in Southeast Asia, with the total cumulative number of confirmed cases from Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam standing at 186 (76% of all cases worldwide, as of 8 September 2006, WHO reports). Most of the confirmed human cases have been in people who have had close contact with sick or dead birds. However, in a few cases, it has not been clearly determined how these people contracted the virus, raising suspicions of potential human-to-human transmission.

The human infections by H5N1 continued to occur in the region throughout the last months. Since the beginning of the year, Indonesia had 44 cases, of which 36 were fatal. Last week, the country confirmed two human cases. A 17-year-old woman from Jakarta died of avian flu and a 17-year-old man from a remote village in West Java also tested positive for H5N1. Thailand reported two cases of H5N1 (both fatal), after eight months of no reported viral activity. Cambodia had two fatal cases in April this year.

East Asia

Avian influenza (H5N1) continues to be a priority concern in East Asia. In China about 40 bird flu outbreaks in poultry have been reported in a dozen provinces over the past year, while most recently China's Ministry of Health confirmed the country's 21st case in humans. The case, which was the first one to be detected in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, resulted in the patient's death on 12 July. Of the 21 cases confirmed to date in China, 14 have been fatal. Earlier in August, China confirmed that the country's first human case of the H5N1 bird flu virus was in November 2003, two years earlier than originally reported.

In May, neighboring Mongolia reported an additional case of H5N1 avian influenza, in a wild whooper swan. The swan was found sick at Khunt Nuur, Saikhan Soum on 4 May in Bulgan, a northern province, during surveillance activities by the Central Veterinary Laboratory. Over the past six months, there have been no reported outbreaks of AI in humans or animals in Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Republic of Korea (ROK) or Japan.

South Asia

No new bird flu cases and outbreaks in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India have been reported since April 2006. People around the vicinity of affected poultry farms were observed and tested, and were all found to be negative of avian influenza. India claimed to have regained an avian influenza free status after not recording new cases for three months of intense stamping out operations (culling, disinfection and clean up) and surveillance around the affected areas and other parts of the country.

Pacific

To date, there have been no avian influenza outbreaks in the Pacific region. Concern remains however of the possibility of importation of the virus by migratory birds coming from affected areas. It is important to ensure that public health actions and preparedness measures are put in place.

Governments response

The World Health Organization (WHO) is working with governments in the region to develop pandemic response plans. These plans include generally elements, such as local health surveillance, reporting of suspected avian flu cases within 24 hours, developing plans for access to health care systems, containment of transmission, allocation of medications, and information coordination with other health authorities. Governments are coordinating with humanitarian agencies including the Red Cross and Red Crescent in bird populations monitoring, and particularly in the affected countries, the governments have been involved in identification of dead birds, testing for existence of the H5N1 virus, culling of flocks and bird populations, and provisions directed by the UN for declaring that a confirmed avian exposure has been eradicated. Cross-border public health response guidance and procedures are also being developed.

To date in Asia Pacific, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, New Zealand, Palau, Singapore and Thailand have published their response plans while all South Asia countries have adopted their national preparedness and response plans. These pandemic response plans often provide for



The Chinese Red Cross is using its extensive network of branches to distribute avian flu information to remote communities.

concerns regarding: public transportation, access to medications, large public gatherings, designation of care centers, access to non-emergency health care, containment of H5N1 exposed individuals, continuation of critical business systems and maintenance of core services, including utilities.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

South-East Asia



V for volunteers: the real meaning of community outreach.

organized in close coordination with the regional offices of the UN-OCHA and United Nations System Influenza Coordination. They now include an informal network of more than fifty concerned international organizations, UN agencies, donor community and representatives from large private corporations based in Bangkok.

Cambodia Red Cross

The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) is successfully conducting a programme for the prevention of avian influenza in nine of the country's 24 provinces. Under this programme, with the support of a core group of 27 avian influenza trainers, 450 Red Cross volunteers have been trained in these nine provinces to disseminate avian influenza prevention messages in their communities.

Branch volunteers were provided with Red Cross T-shirts and caps and information and training materials. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Academy for Education and Development (a US-based non-governmental organization) actively support the CRC by supplying dissemination materials for these

activities. The CRC also actively engages the local governments in their community education activities on avian influenza.

With the support of American Red Cross, on 24 and 25 August, the national society held a national avian influenza workshop, involving Red Cross staff from all 24 provinces, external and respective government organizations and a representative from Viet Nam Red Cross.

One of CRC's key activities in the next months will be to develop CRC's pandemic preparedness and response plan and raise funds at the national level.

In the spirit of a cross-border cooperation agreement signed early this year with national societies from the neighbouring countries (Laos and Viet Nam), the CRC also volunteered to coordinate the start up of cross-border initiatives on avian influenza with these partners.

Palang Merah Indonesia (Indonesian Red Cross)

Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI) implemented avian influenza public awareness campaigns in 12 provinces and a pilot bio-security project early this year. In the past months, the national society also conducted a series of avian influenza awareness sessions for its staff and volunteers and arranged for its frontline staff and volunteers to be vaccinated against the seasonal flu.

However, given the gravity of the country's avian influenza situation, the national society is acutely aware that its current level of activities at community level is insufficient. Thus, it plans to scale up existing interventions and approach potential partners for support. Capitalizing on its earlier programme experience, the national society is planning to start another phase of its public awareness activities in Java, Lampung, Aceh and North Sumatera regions particularly on prevention of transmission from animals to humans and around food security. This will be supported through the Federation's global Avian Influenza appeal. At the same time, with the support of American Red Cross, the PMI will launch avian influenza public awareness activities in Aceh, North Sumatera, Lampung and Banten provinces and Jakarta area.

Viet Nam Red Cross

With the support from the German Red Cross, American Red Cross, the Federation and other partners, the Viet Nam National Red Cross (VNRC) has implemented a public education campaign in ten provinces - Lang Son, Bac Giang, Ha Tay, Thai Binh, Ninh Binh, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Da Nang, Tien Giang and Soc Trang. The society organized three training of trainers courses on avian influenza public education for 136 staff from provincial Red Cross chapters. Afterwards, participants trained 1,650 Red Cross volunteers so that they could educate their communities. Red Cross staff and volunteers visited households and markets, explaining the benefits of good hygiene practices in daily life, disseminating information, education and communication materials. In addition, Red Cross staff and volunteers distributed anti-bacterial soaps together with leaflets to 78,364 households. The national society estimates that its staff and volunteers conducted 10,710 public awareness sessions reaching 2.3 million people.

As some of the ethnic minority communities did not speak Kinh (the official Vietnamese) language, the VNRC recruited volunteers from respective ethnic groups who were Kinh literate and trained them so that they could educate their fellow community members.

In addition to the leaflets, the national society printed 1.1 million posters on avian influenza prevention that were put up in market places and other public places. It also produced audio materials in support of its branches across the country.

The national society is engaged with neighbouring partners such as Chinese Red Cross, Cambodia Red Cross and Lao Red Cross to carry out dissemination in border areas. These campaigns highlighted the need for

common preventive measures to raise awareness on both sides of the border as well as the comparative advantage of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to reach remote areas where few humanitarian organizations venture.

Myanmar Red Cross

The Myanmar Red Cross (MRCS) has made a strategic choice to deliver its avian influenza prevention messages through existing community based first aid and public health in emergencies programmes. Early August 2006, the national society organized a training to create a core group, from all states and divisions, to disseminate key issues of public health in emergencies. This group is tasked to develop trainers and volunteers in avian influenza prevention and preparedness. As part of this initiative, with the support from the UNICEF office in country, the national society has developed different information & communication materials and coordinated with partners its distribution plan for the branches.

MRCS organized a national avian influenza forum to discuss the role of the national society and its branches in case of future outbreaks. The meeting involved 56 participants from all states/divisions. The national society also plans to include/integrate influenza pandemic preparedness components in its public health in emergencies system along with preparedness measures for other communicable diseases.

Philippine National Red Cross

The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) has launched an avian influenza prevention and preparedness programme targeting 20 provinces identified by the national government as potential “hot spots”. The national society organized a series of four orientation workshops in different regions involving 94 Red Cross chapter representatives from 76 provinces. The chapters were also supplied with information, education and communication (IEC) materials, Red Cross uniforms for volunteer educators and personal protective items for pandemic preparedness. Local chapters are also being encouraged to prepare the formation of response teams to respond to any local outbreaks, or likewise integrate the pandemic preparedness training in local disaster responder groups, where they are already established.

Some 600,000 IEC materials, containing avian influenza prevention messages, are being distributed nationwide to the public through PNRC’s chapter and volunteer network. Moreover, following national level training, the 20 chapters have mapped local vulnerabilities and developed chapter level plans for community education work accordingly. The 20 target chapters are now each selecting 30 volunteer core disseminators for orientation training. Trained staff and volunteers, in conjunction with local authorities and health partners, will conduct local surveillance and monitoring.

Singapore Red Cross

Singapore Red Cross developed a coordinated and comprehensive pandemic preparedness plan coordinated with the health authority and hospitals, including contingency planning for maintenance of its essential blood donor recruitment services in time of pandemic.

Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Red Cross)

The Cruz Vermelha de Timor Leste (CVTL) health department has taken part in the planning process for Timor-Leste national avian influenza preparedness plan, and the first version of CVTL avian influenza plan of action was presented in early 2006 with focus on two components, which are closely interlinked; contribution to government’s efforts to reduce exposure risks of communities to the avian influenza virus; and securing minimum level of preparedness of CVTL as an organization to the potential threat of human influenza pandemic. However, due to the recent political developments in the country, the CVTL had to postpone its planned activities on avian influenza until early 2007.

Lao Red Cross

Lao Red Cross, with support of Danish Red Cross, has started a small project to educate the people on avian influenza, using existing materials produced by the government. Up until early 2007, Lao Red Cross plans to revamp its avian influenza awareness raising activities, by integrating public health education messages in existing community-based health and water and sanitation projects in the country's southern and northern provinces.

East Asia

Red Cross Society of China (RCSC)

To date since the national AI conference held at the end of March, the RCSC has been piloting activities in 21 villages in seven provinces. The Federation through initially the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund and later the global Avian Influenza appeal and German Red Cross funding, will work with the RCSC on building on these activities in seven provinces: Hunan, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, Jiangxi, Xinjiang, Gansu and Sichuan provinces.

These provinces have been identified for Federation assistance as several cases of bird flu in animals have been reported in each. At the same time, some of these provinces have also reported incidences of bird flu in humans. Most recently in Qinghai province, some 1,800 ducks have died from bird flu and more than 210,000 have been culled. In Hunan province's Changsha a total of 1,805 ducks have died since the beginning of August, while about 217,000 ducks at the farm have been culled. Provinces such as Gansu and Xinjiang are among the poorest in China and since May, the vulnerability of rural communities and poor farmers to the risks posed by avian influenza in each of these provinces has been coupled with devastating losses sustained as many of these provinces have been affected by the most severe floods and drought in fifty years. In Sichuan province for example, where there were two reported human deaths in January, the agricultural sector has taken a huge beating due to the worst drought in fifty years as some 129 million head of livestock have already died and thousands of farmers have watched their crops wither away. At the same time according to the WHO, although Beijing is committed to combating bird flu, enforcement at the local level is a "mixed picture."

RCSC branches plan to use funds received for AI to implement activities such as: conducting baseline surveys at the respective provincial levels, distributing AI information, health education activities and volunteer recruitment and training.

The RCSC with support from the American Red Cross is preparing to distribute 15,000 copies of an AI prevention guidebook jointly developed with the UN, the Federation and the Ministry of Health to RCSC volunteers and staff in 31 provinces who will be tasked with taking the lead within their communities on educating the public about the prevention of and detection of AI. At the same time RCSC with American Red Cross support is also producing 3,000 DVD-ROMs which contains AI information in supplemental formats which can then be produced locally to best fit the local cultural context. Additionally, 80,000 calendars with key planting dates for farmers will be produced and distributed. As was highlighted at the RCSC's March Conference, information is one of the most important tools for preventing AI.

At the beginning of June, the RCSC's project management office with support from the Federation organized an AI orientation meeting for representatives from RCSC branches in Gansu, Sichuan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, Hunan, Jiangxi, Liaoning and Guangxi. During the two-day meeting, branch representatives



A girl reading awareness message distributed by RCSC.

worked together on identifying the way forward in implementing AI interventions within the RCSC and introducing and increasing the role of the community in AI preparedness and prevention activities.

The June meeting which also included representatives from WHO was an opportunity to share information and lessons learnt. Among the presentations, officers from the RCSC's Guangxi branch were able to share lessons learnt about implementing community-based health education activities after having conducted community-based education activities as part of the Federation supported community vulnerability reduction (CVR) project from 2001-2005. Although some of the branches participating in the Federation's project have experience in community-based health activities for others community based health is a new concept particularly in China where the implementation of these types of activities has been limited. Prior to attending the meeting some of the branches were apprehensive as to whether or not they would be able to conduct these types of activities, however, after hearing the experiences of colleagues from the Guangxi branch these apprehensions were dispelled. Although the focus of Federation supported activities is on AI prevention and preparedness, it is hoped that branches engaged in Federation supported community-based health education activities will be able to apply the skills obtained through AI activities to other health issues or use at a future date in the event of a public health emergency.

The RCSC due to its extensive network of branches has taken a leading role in providing information about AI to remote communities.

Hong Kong branch of the Red Cross Society of China

During the months of July and August, no new avian influenza activities took place. Currently, the Red Cross staff is monitoring WHO, Federation and Hong Kong government activities and developments of avian influenza outbreaks. Hong Kong Red Cross' inter-departmental task force will resume meeting in September to consolidate plans for both potential pandemic response and business contingency.

DPRK Red Cross

The Red Cross Society of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK Red Cross) has integrated avian influenza activities into the society's annual health programme. The national society with support from the Federation has developed a plan of action intended to: 1) contribute to increasing the country's preparedness capacity based upon local Red Cross resources and networks with other partners in the RC/RC movement; and 2) ensure that the DPRK RC has actively involved in the response operations, if the outbreak occurs in the country, in cooperation with other concerned organs like MoPH DPRK.

The DPRK Red Cross AI programme is aimed at ensuring that the national society's coordination and communications mechanisms are kept up to date by establishing a task force led by the Deputy Secretary General to plan and monitor the DPRK RC AI prevention activities; while maintaining contact with the Federation and the WHO.

The national society is also seeking to increase AI awareness in the work place. In cooperation with the DPRK MoPH, the DPRK Red Cross will establish guidelines on Avian Flu prevention measures for health professionals and Red Cross volunteers to observe while carrying out services and activities. The Society also plans to provide flu vaccines for all Red Cross paid staff members and volunteers who will have direct contact with service recipients; and to organize a series of training session on Avian Flu for Red Cross staff and volunteers with the assistance from the MoPH DPRK.

The DPRK Red Cross plans to produce and distribute information brochures to Red Cross staff, volunteers and service recipients to alert them with health knowledge to prevent from being infected with avian flu, in addition the national society plans to procure, pre-stock and distribute hygiene and barrier kits.

Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)

The Mongolian Red Cross Society is collaborating with government and non-governmental organizations on AI issues. National policy and contingency planning is being developed by the government, WHO, World Vision, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and World Bank with the MRCS participating in meetings to clarify the society's role in national AI activities.

South Asia

The South Asian national societies are monitoring the avian and pandemic situation and coordinating with their national committees/task forces.

In response to the first avian flu outbreak in poultry in February, Indian Red Cross distributed 525,000 brochures and pamphlets on avian flu awareness; prepared in 11 languages and distributed to 36 state branches, which officials distributed to district and sub-district branches. Information campaigns using mass media, as well as campaigns targeting poultry farm workers and surrounding communities were also conducted. State disaster response teams in Maharashtra were also involved in the operations. The national society intends to continue awareness activities, and is planning to organize national and regional orientation meetings, mobilize its task force for preparedness, and to continue situation monitoring. Details of response from other South Asian national societies will be reflected in the next bulletin/update.

The Federation's South Asia regional health strategy to support national societies' activities has been finalized. The newly adopted regional health strategy outlines the following:

- Recommended actions for national societies for avian and pandemic influenza (API) preparedness and response being developed, based on guidelines and checklists prepared by the Federation secretariat and external agencies (WHO and FAO); the Federation's regional health unit is also developing a community-based first aid-type module to assist national societies in incorporating API in their on-going training programmes;
- API will be tackled in the upcoming regional health meeting where the current situation and activities will be reviewed and future actions at country and regional levels will also be agreed. A recommendation coming out of the meeting is the creation of a regional API task force (composed of national society and country delegation focal persons) which will serve as a coordinating body to help bring the issue on top of the agenda, as well as mutually support member societies in addressing API issues at country level.

The regional health unit is also working with WHO at regional level for potential collaboration that will benefit South Asia national societies and country delegations.

Pacific

Most national societies are starting or planning to implement the public health in emergencies plans discussed at the Pacific regional health and care officers forum held in February, with attention to avian flu preparedness. Information and pamphlet dissemination has been initiated throughout the region. The Federation regional delegation has provided the national societies with updated information on avian flu and material such as Federation guidelines, frequently asked questions, and a set number of boots, gloves, aprons and masks as well as brochures (at least 5,000 copies per country) for Palau, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga for public dissemination. Many national societies, such as Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga, are part of avian flu task forces in their respective countries.

[Contact details below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The Federation's Global Agenda

The International Federation's activities are aligned with under a Global Agenda, which sets out **four broad goals** to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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