



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

USAID Donates Avian Influenza Protective Gear to Pakistan

Islamabad, May 1, 2007 -- The USAID Mission Director to Pakistan, Mr. Jonathan Addleton, today handed over \$65,000 worth personal protective equipment along with decontamination and laboratory specimen collection kits to the Pakistani officials to help Pakistan cope with outbreaks of bird flu.

“These 4500 kits will protect the workers culling birds potentially infected with bird flu and those surveying for possible human infections,” Jonathan Addleton said.

On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, the donation was received by Dr. R.H. Usmani, Animal Husbandry Commissioner of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) and Gen. (R), Masood Anwar, Executive Director, National Institute of Health, Islamabad.

The protective gear, comprising suits, respirators, goggles and gloves, will benefit the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) and the National Institute of Health to store at the provincial level in readiness for the next outbreaks. The protective kits will be distributed to people who come in direct contact with poultry or people potentially infected with the Avian Influenza virus.

The USAID Mission Director appreciated the development of the Integrated National Plan for Combating Avian Influenza and Human Pandemic Influenza by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock.

“We should keep in mind that this year in Pakistan, there have been 23 outbreaks of H5N1 in birds that have been documented and reported to international bodies. These outbreaks have received much less press than last year, thus limiting the negative effects on the poultry industry,” Jonathan Addleton observed.

“The most recent cases serve to remind us that both MINFAL and Ministry of Health’s National Institute of Health are working diligently to contain bird flu in Pakistan,” the senior American diplomat said. “Both Ministries must remain vigilant to detect and contain the virus but also need to educate the citizens of this nation, particularly at the village level – so that they too may play an active role in prevention, early-warning and control of the virus,” Mr. Addleton emphasized.

Through a USAID training program in December 2006, ten Pakistani officials were identified as master trainers who will train others on the correct use of personal protective

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equipment and decontamination kits and on the correct method for gathering samples and preparing them for shipment to laboratories.

Pakistan was one of the first of 22 countries worldwide in which USAID delivered this training program and equipment. The gear will limit the risk of animal-to-animal and animal-to-human infection during outbreak response activities such as disposing of infected poultry and decontaminating poultry raising areas.

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