



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

USAID Provides 4,500 Kits and Training to Improve Readiness for Bird Flu in Pakistan

Islamabad, December 19, 2006: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announces its provision of a new training program on the use of avian influenza (“bird flu”) equipment for 10 officials from national and provincial levels of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. The two-day training program—facilitated by implementing partners Development Alternatives Inc (DAI) and Leadership in Environment and Development (LEAD)—will cover the use of personal protective equipment, the correct use of decontamination kits and good work practices for gathering samples and preparing them for shipment to laboratories.

In addition, USAID will provide a shipment of 4,500 Personal Protective Kits as a key step to increase Pakistan’s preparation for a possible outbreak. These kits will protect the workers culling birds potentially infected with bird flu and those surveying for possible human infections. They will be divided between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and the National Institute for Health to store at the provincial level in readiness for the next outbreaks.

Pakistan is one of the first of 22 countries worldwide in which USAID will deliver this training program and equipment. Since its emergence in Southeast Asia in 2003, bird flu has swept across Asia, Europe, and Africa. As of November 29, 2006, at least 258 human cases of bird flu have been confirmed, with 154 fatalities in 10 countries.

USAID and other agencies in the U.S. government are working to coordinate international preparedness and response measures. USAID, in particular, is working to ensure an effective and coordinated approach to this threat. Worldwide, USAID has committed \$191 million in foreign assistance for bird flu and pandemic preparedness, and supports related activities in 53 countries.

In Pakistan, USAID is working on the national and provincial levels to prepare for any possible future outbreak of bird flu. Through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), USAID has provided more than \$350,000 to the National Reference Lab of Pakistan for Poultry Diseases. USAID funding supports field surveillance, post-vaccination monitoring and disease reporting throughout the country.

In addition, USAID is providing approximately \$5.5 million over three years to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to establish a Field Epidemiology and

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Laboratory Training Program (FELTP) at the NIH in Pakistan. This program will provide intensive practical training for health officials at national, provincial and district levels in conducting infectious disease outbreak investigations.

Overall, the United States, through USAID, is providing more than \$1.5 billion in development assistance to Pakistan over the next five years to improve education, health, governance and economic growth. In addition, the United States has pledged a total of \$510 million in earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts to assist the people of Pakistan and to support Pakistani government relief and reconstruction efforts.

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