



Media Note
Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
November 19, 2005

United States-China Joint Initiative on Avian Influenza

The following is a joint statement by the United States and the People's Republic of China.

Begin text:

The United States and the People's Republic of China are committed to stopping the spread of emerging infectious diseases, including the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of avian influenza. Together, we seek to expand efforts to prepare for, prevent and respond to a potential human influenza pandemic. As key partners in the World Health Organization, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza and the health initiatives in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the United States and China have identified priority actions for improving national plans to prepare for an influenza pandemic and are committed at the highest levels to enhance capabilities in these areas.

In this context, the United States and China will take joint actions at bilateral, global and regional levels to prevent and respond to avian and pandemic influenza, which includes:

I. At the bilateral level, the United States and China will strengthen cooperation between the Health and Agriculture Ministries of the two countries, on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and complementarity, and consistent with our national law and security protocols, to increase capacity for detecting, responding to and controlling an influenza pandemic. Key elements include the following:

Influenza Vaccine Development and Testing: Leveraging scientific expertise, the United States and China will work together to evaluate, improve and expedite the production of human and animal vaccines against influenza in order to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. The United States and China will jointly perform research on human and animal virus samples in order to develop human and animal vaccines. The United States is prepared to provide technical assistance for influenza vaccine development and on quality-assurance for vaccine production and testing, as well as financial assistance for supplies and equipment.

Surveillance and Rapid Response: Recognizing the importance of early detection in minimizing the spread and limiting the economic impacts of pandemic influenza, we will work together to improve surveillance capacities and support epidemiological studies in high risk geographical areas. The United States and China will establish a mechanism to efficiently share influenza strains to study the evolution of the virus. The United States will provide assistance to China in training veterinarians, medical personnel and public health workers, and provide financial and technical support to expand the usage in China of rapid testing kits for H5N1 avian influenza.

Pandemic Preparedness Planning: The United States and China will share strategies for pandemic influenza planning, at different levels of government. We will highlight gaps in strategies and, where appropriate, provide training, expertise, technical assistance or information.

II. At the international level, the United States and China will actively support and join the global effort against avian influenza. We shall work together to support the UN system, particularly the World Health Organization, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health and other relevant organizations in playing a leading role in this regard. We shall work together to promote the mobilization of resources, improve coordination and prevent either duplication or gaps. China will continue to support the United States' initiative on the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza. The United States will support China in hosting the Ministerial Pledging Conference for Avian Influenza in January 2006 as a forum for sharing action plans and mobilizing resources at regional and international levels. The United States and China will strengthen coordination and cooperation to work for the success of these two global initiatives.

III. At the regional level, the United States and China will actively support and join regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. Priorities should be given to implementing the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Initiative on Preparing for and Mitigating an Influenza Pandemic, which is co-sponsored by the United States and China, and work for a successful Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Symposium on Emerging Infectious Diseases to be held in China in April 2006. In addition, both the United States and China have provided assistance to some affected Asian countries. Closer cooperation between the United States and China is needed in this area to help those affected developing countries to formulate and improve pandemic preparedness planning and increase their capacity. Where necessary, the United States and China will work together to provide training, equipment, technical support and expertise, and cooperate with these countries to develop systems to detect and respond to influenza infections in animals or humans that have the potential to lead to a human pandemic. A tripartite cooperation mechanism can also be explored in the production, stockpiling and distribution of medicines and vaccines as well as personnel training. The United States will work with China to meet regulatory certification requirements so that China can supply vaccine regionally or globally.

End text.

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