

PANEL PRESENTATION TO THE SESSION ON GOVERNANCE, MONITORING AND COORDINATION

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Chairman

I am grateful for the opportunity to address this important meeting with some thoughts on the subject of governance, accountability and coordination. I do so as a staff member of the British Government's DFID and not as the Presidency of the European Union. I am not therefore speaking on this occasion on behalf of the Member States of the EU or of the European Commission, who may wish to contribute separately to the discussion.

Governance

On Governance it seems to me important that there is some form of ongoing forum through which Governments and international organisations should periodically come together. The purpose would be to review the continuing relevance of our strategies and progress against them; and to consider how any high level blockages or constraints can be addressed. I therefore agree with the proposal made on high level coordination and leadership by the UN System Coordinator, Dr Nabarro.

The governance and leadership of this forum needs to be such as to provide strong political leadership, legitimacy and inclusiveness. Meeting these criteria will enhance the mandate and impact of the forum.

If the forum is to be more than a talking shop it needs a hard edge to it. We should not meet just because the issue is important; we should meet because by doing so we can make a positive difference. The hard edge comes from being clear what commitments are being made and by whom – the international agencies, the donors and the countries affected and at risk. We can then at a later date assess whether expected progress is being made, focusing on what needs to be done about our failures as well as what can be learned from our successes. That requires information to come to the high level meeting that reports on and analyses achievements. I therefore welcome the proposals on monitoring presented by Dr Nabarro. It will be important to have a modest secretariat function to prepare for meetings of the forum. I suggest this should be located either with the UN System Coordinator or the World Bank.

Accountability

We have referred frequently to the importance as well as the seriousness of the challenges we face. We have endorsed the principle that the multilateral agencies should have a central and critical role in leading and coordinating our efforts. It will be correspondingly vital that they deliver. It will be our responsibility to support them in this but also, on behalf of our Governments and people, to hold them to account for their performance.

But although the accountability of the international agencies is central, it is not only they who should be accountable for performance; all Governments and involved agencies have responsibilities, whether as countries affected or at risk, as donors or as regional organisations. This accountability may be within the framework of a country programme, a regional or global initiative or to this forum.

To be accountable, whoever we are, we need to have:

- Clear responsibilities.
- Specific targets, milestones and time frames; these need to be challenging, especially given the urgency of the issues, but also realistic. Grand plans that we cannot implement would be worse than useless. General strategies, however well-conceived, that are not developed into detailed action plans may not lead to effective implementation; this point was well made yesterday on the issue of stockpiles.
- Good and independently verified information on performance so that we can see what is working and what is not. The clearer and more specific the targets the less contentious the reporting on them.

A final point on this, which links in to the last section of my remarks, is the importance of common reporting arrangements. We should avoid multiple reporting arrangements that place an unnecessary burden on already overburdened institutions.

Coordination

In commenting on coordination I would refer to the need for coordination and integrated working of the multilateral agencies. Many interventions in the last three days, including from the multilateral agencies, have stressed the importance of effective joining up of avian and human health work. The expressed high level commitment of these agencies has been encouraging. It has been less easy to see that these agencies are identifying synergies and coordinating effectively at the operational level rather than having separate programmes and proposals. It will be vital to have such linkages, especially at country level and to translate the high level commitment to coordinated working into reality.

There is considerable reluctance to establish new financing mechanisms or institutions that would take along time to set up and could cut across existing mechanisms. The downside of this is a risk of uncoordinated action and unclear priorities. If these risks are to be managed, there will need to be more

detailed and frequent coordination than a more political forum can provide. This would complement the coordination at country level. I therefore support the proposal made in Dr Nabarro's presentation on working level coordination; but it was presented in much less detail than the other levels of coordination and more work appears to be needed on it.

Earlier presentations rightly focused particularly on the country level. Here it will be essential to have:

- A common framework of country-led integrated national plans, consistent with the strategic guidelines of the multilateral agencies, to provide a framework for national and international efforts;
- All country level interventions within the integrated national plan;
- Given the likely need for flexibility and prioritisation, as well as reducing the administrative burden on governments, an emphasis on programme financing, rather than a multiplicity of separate projects;
- Shared monitoring and reporting arrangements;
- A commitment to mutual accountability for agreed programmes.

Similar principles apply to regional and global programmes.

There have been several calls for flexibility in financing. Programme financing will help at country level and with individual institutions. But given the level of uncertainty, financing plans also need to allow for flexibility between countries and institutions so that efforts can be quickly refocused on new challenges.

Conclusion

Chairman: We have identified a great deal that needs to be done: at country, regional and global levels; on a more urgent basis and in the medium to longer term; and with particular reference to developing countries as well as more generic prescriptions. But if the commitment exhibited here over the last three days is to be translated in to effective action we need to focus on these arrangements for governance, accountability and coordination; without this experience suggests that many of our fine words may largely remain just that rather than being, as they should, a signpost to as effective as possible a contribution to tackling the challenge of avian and human pandemic influenza. I therefore suggest that the UN System Coordinator and the World Bank, in conjunction with FAO/OIE/WHO, be tasked to prepare very specific proposals on these issues for consideration no later than at the proposed meeting in January.