

Please check against delivery

(Translation)

## **Speech at the International Conference on Avian Influenza**

**By Ambassador Hu Xiaodi**

(7 November 2005, Geneva)

Madam Chair,

First of all, please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese Government, to extend my gratitude to WHO, FAO, OIE and World Bank for organizing this conference.

I will introduce the current situation of avian influenza in China, the measures China has taken in response to avian influenza, medium and long-term strategies, China's role in the global effort against avian influenza as well as China's proposals.

Now, let me brief you on the current situation of avian influenza in China and the measures we have taken.

In 2004, there were 50 cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza in China. Up to now this year, there are 7 cases of poultry avian influenza and 1 case of migrant bird avian influenza in 7 provinces. More than 830,000 poultry were culled. All poultry cases have been under control or culled and no human cases have been detected.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to prevention and control of avian influenza and took a series of concrete measures in this regard:

I. Establishing and improving the network of prevention and control of avian influenza.

Since the first case was detected in 2004, the Chinese Government established national headquarter for HPAI prevention and control, which is composed of officials from Ministry of Agriculture, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Finance Ministry,

Ministry of Health, National Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (NAQSIQ), National Administration for Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and National Administration of Customs.

In 2005, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture established a cooperation mechanism to prevent and control avian influenza and other infectious diseases found in both human and animals. They have also set up an inter-agency team, convene regular meetings and have launched pandemic reporting system as well as joint inspection system. Departments of public health, transportation, railway, civil aviation and quarantine have set up a cooperative network, where each department plays its due role and meanwhile works with each other to increase synergy. Different regions coordinate and support each other, share information and improve the regional prevention and control mechanism in order to effectively respond to the pandemic.

China has established a surveillance network covering all provinces on the mainland of China, which includes 304 national monitoring surveillance stations on animal epidemic, 146 border surveillance stations, 192 national monitoring stations and 63 influenza laboratories. Since 2004, the national influenza surveillance network was extended to monitor influenza and human infection of avian influenza concurrently. This network effectively prevents human infection of avian influenza.

II. Formulating and implementing policies and contingency planning.

Since 2004, Ministry of Health has formulated *the Preparedness and Contingency Planning for Influenza Pandemic, the Emergency Planning for Human Infections Pandemic Outbreak of Avian influenza* and *the Guidance for Diagnosis, Treatment, Prevention and Control of Human Infections of Avian Influenza*. The local public health agencies have also formulated detailed, feasible *Contingency Planning* in the context of local situations.

Since the beginning of this year, China has formulated *the National Emergency Planning for Animal Pandemic Outbreak, the National Emergency Planning for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza* and *China's*

*Preparedness Planning for Influenza Pandemic.*

In September this year, while drawing upon *Guideline for Country's Influenza Pandemic* by WHO, the Ministry of Health, as the leading agency, formulated *the Preparedness and Contingency Plan for Influenza Pandemic in China* and the Ministry of Agriculture printed and distributed *the Contingency Implementation Plan for the Prevention and Control on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Autumn and Winter in 2005* and *the Contingency Working Procedure of Prevention and Control on Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Autumn and Winter in 2005*.

All these regulations and contingency plans set out specific provisions for institutional management, epidemic surveillance reporting, detection and response, diagnosis and treatment for contingency response to human infection of pathogenic avian influenza in the whole country's public health system and give instructions to the scientific, standard and effective prevention and control work at local level.

III. Immediate responding to avian influenza, and culling the affected poultry on the spot.

After avian influenza detected, the local government, in line with the provision of the state and the Ministry of Agriculture activated the contingency plan and took a series of prevention and control measures, including blockading the affected areas, forbidding the movement of the poultry and its products in affected areas to the outside, controlling people and vehicles entering into or exiting from it. Furthermore, all poultry located within 3 kilometers of the affected areas were culled, burned and buried in a harmless manner. Compulsory Sterilization was given to the farming houses, containers, roads and vehicles as well as farming workers. Emergent vaccination was also given to the poultry that were in danger and prone to be infected in the nearby areas. As a result, there were more than 20 million poultry in 7 affected provinces were conducted emergent immunization.

IV. Strengthening scientific research, carrying out technical training and putting forward *Overall Program of Scientific and technology Research on Prevention and Control on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza*.

Currently, every province, city and county has set up diagnosis and detection labs on animal epidemics, which can conduct initial diagnosis on avian influenza. We are strengthening the professional training for personnel at all levels in prevention and control on influenza so as to enhance the capacity of medical team for early detection and on-site response to epidemics. We are promoting standard aquiculture auxiliary technology and give instructions on scaled breeding for the aquiculture community and enterprises. In 2004, the Chinese Government allocated 100 million RMB to establish a special fund for the scientific and technological research.

#### V. Providing financial support.

The central fiscal budget has provided strong financial support for prevention and control of human infections of pathogenic avian influenza, which includes providing equipment and carrying out surveillance, personnel training and emergency exercise, making compensation for all types of poultry culled due to avian influenza and providing subsidies to vaccine and immunization. Governments at all levels have set out in a timely manner relevant supporting policies and measures minimizing the side effects on agriculture production and farmers' life.

#### VI. Establishing an open reporting system on epidemic situation.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health jointly set up reporting system, which will report to each other epidemic situation within 24 hours after confirmed cases of avian influenza and other infectious diseases found both in animals and human. The central government reports its epidemic situation to the public and improves its cooperation mechanism between the mainland of China and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan province. At the international level, China timely reports the epidemic situation and prevention and control measures to the WHO, FAO and OIE and reported to over 80 countries and resident offices of international organizations.

#### VII. Conducting strict import and export quarantine and supervision.

China has taken measures to timely forbid the import of poultry and birds from affected countries and regions, strengthen port investigation, combat smuggling and strength sterilization of vehicles and goods

coming in and out of China, outlaw live poultry and its products at borders. Risk assessment is conducted on imported goods to strengthen border quarantine mechanism and strictly prevent disease from abroad.

VIII. Popularizing science and education, increasing public awareness and conducting joint prevention and control effort.

The Chinese Government publicizes the knowledge of avian influenza, as well as national policies and new methods of prevention and control through various types of media, such as TV, radio, newspaper and the Internet, enhancing professional skills of grassroots veterinarians and actively conduct technological consulting on prevention and control on avian influenza, increasing public awareness on conscientious prevention and self-protection. According to survey, the awareness rate among Chinese farmers on avian influenza reached 98.6%.

The above measures taken by the Chinese Government have proved to be effective. There is no human case of highly pathogenic avian influenza. However, prevention and control of avian influenza is a long-term hard work. Recently, several countries in Asia-Pacific have detected avian influenza cases and the affected countries are still increasing. Now is the time for birds to migrate. The birds usually travel across many provinces and wide areas in China. Given these, it is very likely that the migrant birds will transmit disease to poultry. In addition, China poultry farming covers broad area and is large in its number, which further increases the challenge to the prevention and control of avian influenza.

We have formally activated the National headquarter for HPAI Prevention and Control. Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu took the lead in this headquarter and there are 6 working groups and offices in this Team, with the leading officials from the Agriculture Ministry, NDRC, MFA, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Commerce and NAQSIA as chief of the 6 working groups and offices. The National headquarter is the highest coordination agency for the prevention and control of avian influenza. China has formulated a series of medium-term and long-term measures including:

I. China will continue to strengthen pandemic surveillance and

ensure early reporting. China will establish and improve its pandemic reporting system, which will detect report, respond to and control pandemic at an early time. China will firmly control and stop the spread of the disease and ensure the immunization of water birds and poultry through increasing the immunization coverage, monitoring epidemic situation, enhancing early warning capacity, improving reporting and investigation system.

II. China will take further actions to prevent human infection of avian influenza, which is the priority of the prevention and control effort.

China will further improve its preparedness planning for human infection and implement all kinds of measures. More stations will be set up to expand the surveillance coverage. Hospitals and clinics will be given more attention to as sites for detecting human infectious cases, which will promptly report cluster of infections cases. More attention will be given to students, medical personnel and laboratory workers. Efforts will be made to strengthen surveillance of the health condition of workers in poultry farming, trafficking and processing. More strict preventive measures will be taken for these engaged in culling. Once symptoms detected in them, especially in the form of abnormal clusters, epidemiological investigations and emergency response will be conducted.

III. Speeding up structural reform and capacity building.

We shall step up structural reform of the management of veterinarians, improving the administrative and executive management and technical support of veterinarians. We will continue to strengthen the animal disease prevention system at the grassroots level, implement animal disease prevention engineering projects, improve the national capacity for prevention and control, and improve infrastructure building. We will promote the change of poultry farming so as to develop the scaled, standard, clean and improved farming system to meet the requirement for disease prevention.

IV. Increasing funding in pandemic prevention.

The Central Government has allocated 2 billion RMB out of the general budget and set up HPAI Fund in 2005, with emphasis on the

development of new and effective vaccine at an early time. We shall increase subsidies for vaccination and carry out mandatory vaccination of all water bird and backyard poultry. We shall increase funding for the research and development of rapid detection technology of HPAI. We will increase financial support for the national monitoring stations for animal diseases and border monitoring stations for animal diseases in order to support the construction of National Reference Laboratory, i.e. P4 Laboratory. We will implement earnestly the policy of compensation for the culling of poultry in the affected areas and mandatory vaccination in areas under threat.

V. Carrying out research and development, with emphasis on the development and promotion of testing kits, new and effective vaccine and drugs. We will step up science research and stockpiling research of key technologies. We will strengthen epidemiology studies of avian influenza pandemic, speed up the research and development of vaccine for HPAI for human beings, raise the production capacity of vaccine and increase our technological and production preparedness for avian influenza pandemic.

VI. Setting up information release mechanism and reporting timely, accurately and objectively.

In line with the provisions of the *National Contingency Plan for Major Outbreak of Animal Pandemic and the National Contingency Plan for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza*, based on epidemic monitoring, vaccination, movement of migrant birds and epidemic situation in China, the Ministry of Agriculture will issue an early warning on HPAI to the public.

Madam Chair,

Avian influenza respects no national boundaries, which calls for joint efforts of the international community. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the international cooperation and has carried out extensive cooperation with relevant countries and organizations

In the multilateral arena, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Public Health, together with FAO and WHO, has set up a joint meeting system.

China played an active role in a series of international meetings, including *the Ministerial Meeting of Public Health on Fighting the Wide Spread of Influenza*, *the Avian Flu International Partnership Program* and the APEC Avian Influenza Seminar, etc. China has also reached an agreement on the provision of virus samples. In the bilateral arena, China has done its best in providing funds, in-kind and technological assistance to neighboring countries affected by the pandemic.

China would like to further step up international cooperation with relevant international governments and countries concerned in the following specific fields:

I. Exchanging information of the avian influenza pandemic with international organizations and countries concerned, complementing each other regarding avian influenza prevention and control, contingency planning strategy and measures in response to influenza pandemic as well as research and development in surveillance and prevention and control.

II. China will provide support to the countries concerned in formulating contingency plan, on-site epidemiological investigation and lab test expert training in cases of human HPAI.

III. Strengthening cooperation with countries, providing material and technical assistance.

IV. Enhancing cooperation with international organizations and other countries on surveillance of human avian influenza and early warning technology, particularly the setting up of symptom surveillance system. China hopes to receive technical support and equipment in poor areas.

V. Stepping up cooperation with all parties in the research and development, production and stockpiling of anti-virus drugs and vaccines.

VI. Promoting domestic production of vaccine. Conduct international cooperation regarding research and development in vaccine for human infections of HPAI and rapid test kits as well as in effectiveness and drug resistance.

VII. Cooperating with international organizations to strengthen national capacity.

VIII. Supporting international organizations to enhance coordination to effectively use the international resources. Strengthening laboratory

exchanges and appropriately handling IPR and its related issues.

Madam Chair,

Currently, the international community and countries concerned have launched a series of initiatives and have taken active measures in fighting the pandemic. At the Summit Meeting of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, the US initiated *the International Partnership Program on Avian Flu* and subsequently held the *World Conference on International Partnership on Avian Influenza*. Canada also hosted the international health ministers' meeting on global pandemic in October, and put forward the initiative on strengthening the cooperation on prevention and control of avian influenza within the framework of APEC. Australia hosted the APEC Meeting on Avian and Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response in October. All these initiatives are conducive to the furthering of exchange and cooperation on prevention and control of avian influenza and are of great importance to preparedness for the human pandemic influenza and the enhancement of the international cooperation in this regard.

Here, I would like to put forward the following proposals to further promote the international cooperation on prevention and control of avian influenza:

I. The United Nations system, in particular, the organizations like WHO and FAO should play a pivotal role. Given the different national situations, each country has its own needs and concerns. Hence, the relevant agencies of the UN system should strengthen the coordination on international prevention and control of avian influenza, pool all sorts of international resources into international cooperation of avian influenza and promote the effectiveness and relevance of cooperation in this regard.

II. Regional cooperation should be enhanced. Recently, the regional organizations such as the APEC and ASEAN held the meetings on avian influenza consecutively and played an active role in deepening the cooperation on prevention and control of international avian influenza.

III. The International community especially the developed countries should increase the financial and technological assistance to the affected

countries and regions, in particular to the developing countries to build up their capacity in prevention and preparedness, formulate a core element or guidelines for contingency plan of HPAI and provide such training as epidemic situation tracing and assessment.

IV. The establishment of the mechanism of surveillance of avian and human influenza and early warning system is the important guarantee of prevention and control of avian influenza. International cooperation in this regard will be conducive to early detection and quantifying the epidemic situation. The international community should provide necessary assistance to the developing countries in making their contingency mechanism and plans and set up of global surveillance and prevention network.

V. Carrying out the science and research of prevention and control of avian influenza. The international community should strengthen the scientific research on epidemiology, laboratory testing, medicine and vaccine, conduct cooperation on human and animal vaccination and anti-virus stockpiling, at the same time, the IPR issues should be handled properly and the cost of production and the access to the vaccine and drugs by the affected developing countries should be reduced.

Thank you, Madam Chair.