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## USAID Engagement in Avian Influenza

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The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes H5N1 avian influenza (AI) as a threat not only to public health but also to the economic stability and development of affected countries. USAID is fully engaged in the U.S. Government's AI response. USAID has made containing the virus in animals and limiting its spread in humans a top priority, and works closely with international and private sector partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to ensure a well-coordinated and strategically sound response to this global threat.

### Overview of USAID Funding for Avian Influenza Activities

USAID is providing foreign assistance for AI activities in 53 countries, and works with other U.S. Government departments, international and private-sector partners, and foreign governments to support AI programs through regional platforms, USAID Missions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. Largely through grants and technical assistance, the Agency has committed over \$191 million in foreign assistance for avian influenza and pandemic preparedness.

Of USAID's AI funds, \$14 million and \$23 million, respectively, are for activities with WHO and FAO, which are major partners in USAID's AI efforts, and \$78 million has been committed to support AI activities in countries affected by the virus. Of this \$78 million, \$46 million is for efforts in Asia and the Near East, \$19 million is for Europe and Eurasia, \$11 million is for Africa, and \$2 million is for Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, USAID is managing a \$56-million commodity stockpile, which includes essential commodities such as personal protective equipment (PPE) for surveillance workers and first responders, decontamination equipment and specimen collection supplies.



Dr. Gavin Macgregor-Skinner/USAID

**A team of U.S. Government and local health experts dressed in personal protective equipment (PPE) use decontamination spray after investigating an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in wild birds and domestic poultry in Turkey, January 2006.**

## USAID's Avian Influenza Response: Key Actions to Date

To support countries that are at risk for avian influenza outbreaks, USAID provides assistance in five key areas: planning and preparedness, surveillance and case detection, communications, commodity stockpiling, and emergency outbreak response.

**Planning and preparedness:** USAID is supporting national planning and preparedness efforts for AI control and outbreak response in each of its regions. In collaboration with WHO, FAO, and other partners, USAID is working with governments to develop and support national AI task forces and preparedness plans in 53 countries. In addition, USAID is working with WHO and FAO to conduct simulations of national preparedness plans to detect weaknesses and areas that require further attention.

**Surveillance and case detection:** USAID is supporting animal and human disease-monitoring efforts in Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and works with host governments, NGOs, and private sector and international partners to enhance the ability of affected countries to rapidly detect H5N1 in animals and humans. Information gathered in disease monitoring supports community-level early warning networks. In Indonesia, USAID is supporting the implementation of a community-based surveillance approach that trains local teams to routinely visit villages collecting laboratory samples and other essential surveillance data. USAID is also working with partners through the Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance to increase global surveillance of wild migratory birds to track the movement of H5N1 AI, identify genetic changes in the virus, and improve early detection of changes in H5N1 that can threaten human health.

**Communications:** USAID is supporting AI-related communications and public outreach activities in 37 countries. Mass media and additional community-level outreach to rural populations generates public awareness and promotes behaviors that help reduce risks for disease transmission. In Laos and Cambodia, USAID has created the animated character, Superchicken. Through television, local theatre and other public events, Superchicken is disseminating risk reduction messages to the public. USAID is also working with its partners to develop communications strategies and campaigns in each region, and is supporting trainings for journalists on how to report about AI.

**Commodity stockpiling:** Since January 2006, USAID has completed building a stockpile of 1.5 million personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, 100 laboratory kits, and 15,000 decontamination kits. Over 200,000 PPE kits have been deployed to 71 countries for use by responders in the field, including surveillance workers and outbreak response teams. USAID is supporting training for first responders in AI-affected countries to learn how to use PPE, collect and ship samples, detect disease using improved laboratory equipment, and provide emergency response to outbreak situations. In anticipation of new avian influenza outbreaks USAID is pre-positioning PPE kits, decontamination kits, and laboratory kits in 20 countries.

**Outbreak response:** USAID is working with its partners to help countries in animal and human H5N1 response efforts across the globe. On the animal side, activities in 25 countries include promotion of safe culling and disposal procedures and improved biosecurity practices in poultry-raising settings. On the human side, USAID assistance in 19 countries includes provision of commodities such as diagnostic equipment, training to improve case management and infection control in health facilities, and support for developing standard operating procedures for health facilities at the central and peripheral levels.