



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

2006/SOM 3/HTF/015
Agenda Item: III.1

Report of the APEC Symposium on Emerging Infectious Diseases

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: China



**Health Task Force Meeting
Da Nang, Viet Nam
14 – 15 September 2006**

Report of the APEC Symposium on Emerging Infectious Diseases 4-5 April 2006, Beijing, China

1. Introduction

The APEC Health Task Force (HTF) has been paying special attention to emerging infectious diseases since its inception. Many collaborative projects have been initiated by member economies and then approved and implemented by HTF successfully. To enable adequate, systematic and well-coordinated prevention and control against health threats in the Asian-Pacific region requires the unswerving efforts of and close cooperation among the APEC economies in the field of emerging infectious diseases prevention and control. APEC Leaders endorsed an initiative on Preparing for and Mitigating an Influenza Pandemic during the APEC Leaders' Meeting in November 2005. This project responds directly to the Leaders' Initiative on "Preparing for and Mitigating an Influenza Pandemic." The APEC Symposium on Emerging Infectious Diseases was held in Beijing, China on 4-5 April 2006. The Symposium was organized by China, and cosponsored by the United States, Australia; and Thailand.

2. Objective of the Symposium

The Symposium has three main objectives:

- 1) Evaluate implementation on response to outbreaks of avian influenza and preparedness for a human emergency, identify gap and suggest further actions;
- 2) Identify and assess economies' advantage and needs for capacity-building in the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases and explore ways to establish systematic and effective mechanism for prevention and control of epidemics;
- 3) Help APEC economies establish long-term technical coordination mechanism and explore ways to design training and capacity-building projects to enhance public and local authority's awareness and early detection capability.

3. Participants in the Symposium

The symposium was intended for senior officials and experts on emerging infectious diseases from member economies, including health sector, agriculture and emergency services. The symposium was also of interest to other stakeholders such as representatives of the WHO, UNAIDS and ADB.

Approximately 90 participants, representing ministries of health, agriculture, and foreign affairs from 21 economies, attended the symposium. Representatives from the WHO, UNAIDS, ILO and ADB also attended.

4. Discussion Sessions

Vice Health Minister Chen Xiaohong, Vice-chair of the HTF Dr. Li Shichuo addressed the opening ceremony of the Symposium. WHO representative to China, Dr. Henk Bekedam and Mr. Chris Spohr from ADB gave keynote speeches on Global Challenges of EIDs to Human Health, and Emerging Infectious Diseases and Socio-economic Development respectively in the opening ceremony.

The symposium addressed the major emerging infectious diseases of international and regional concern. The discussion included four sessions, covering Strategies for the

Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Progress of Emerging Diseases' Prevention and Control, Avian Influenza Control and Preparedness for Human Pandemic, and Fighting against HIV/AIDS. Presentations were given by representatives from member economies (China, Viet Nam, US, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, New Zealand, Thailand, Australia, Malaysia, Chinese Taipei) and international organizations (UN, WHO, UNAIDS, ILO). Following presentations in each session, in-depth discussions were held to exchange information and experiences.

Participants agreed on relevant issues of the prevention and control of emerging infectious disease, mainly including:

1. Emerging infectious diseases can have wide range effects. During the past three decades, there were tens of various kinds of emerging infectious diseases detected, some of which spreaded regionally or even globally. Emerging and reemerging infectious diseases pose a constant threat to the health, prosperity and security of the Asia- Pacific region. In particular, the consequences of the global spread of HIV/AIDS, the rapid appearance of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and the emergence and continued occurrence of human infection by highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses, stress the urgency to develop effective cooperation to control, and more importantly, prevent this threat.
2. Fully recognized the severity and urgency of the thread posed by infectious diseases, base on the situation of and need for the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases, member economies undertook extensive and effective work in the field of legislation, construction of the surveillance and report system, laboratory capacity building, preparedness plan, risk communication and international cooperation. China set up the network direct report system on infectious diseases and public health emergency on a case by case base, which laid foundation for the early detection and early warning of emerging infectious diseases; Korea had seen remarkable effects in the implementation of the measles eradication activities and malaria control program; the United States undertook several emerging infectious disease cooperation programs. All these presentations together with the others received high recognition of the symposium.
3. Consensus reached to further promote the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases, and effective response to the threat posed by emerging infectious diseases in the following six areas:
 - 1) To reaffirm their commitment to incorporating prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases into the overall planning of economic and social development, and developing laws, regulations, and preparedness plans on the prevention and treatment of emerging infectious diseases;
 - 2) To enhance economies' surveillance and response capacity on emerging infectious diseases, including:
 - Establishing and improving infectious disease surveillance networks both domestically and between APEC economies;
 - Developing regional laboratory networks and enhancing the testing, data sharing, and safety capacity of laboratories;
 - Strengthening institutional structures and linkages for prevention and control and improving public health emergency responsiveness;
 - Promoting development of human resources for health and intensifying training of managerial and professional staff to enhance capacity for preparedness and response;
 - Supporting research, development, regulation and distribution of safe and effective

- diagnostics, therapeutic drugs, and vaccines for emerging infectious diseases;
- Improving the quality of care and treatment of emerging infectious diseases; and
 - Enhancing bio-safety standards at commercial farms and markets, improving veterinary capacity to detect and report infectious disease outbreaks, and strengthening animal health capacity to respond to outbreaks;
- 3) To encourage participation from all sectors in society and promote collaboration in the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases, emphasizing:
- Strengthened inter-sector coordination and cooperation, especially between the Agriculture, Public Health and wild life management sectors;
 - Promotion of public-private partnership and encouragement of the business sector to actively participate in the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases; and
 - Increased public awareness through dissemination of science-based prevention messages and methods;
- 4) To release information relating to the prevention and control of emerging infectious disease, including outbreak reports, diagnostic results and relevant genetic information, in a timely and transparent manner and promote the timely sharing of information and samples among the economies;
- 5.) To conduct specific assessments on the economic and social impacts of particular emerging infectious diseases to help formulate policies, guide decision-making and contribute to the formulation of sound and rational strategies for the prevention and control of infectious diseases; and
- 6) To facilitate technical and scientific cooperation and assistance for prevention and control measures among economies. Economies are encouraged to coordinate with each other to ensure the timely and efficient provision of relevant technology, financial or in-kind support, and personnel training to other APEC economies.

Outcomes of the Symposium were presented to the Ministerial Meeting on Avian Influenza held in Da Nang, Viet Nam in May 2006.