

**Inter-agency information sharing/coordination
Meeting on avian influenza**

*Hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies,
Southeast Asia Regional Delegation, Bangkok*

**November 1, 2007, 2-5 p.m.
Imperial Queen's Park Hotel, Bangkok**

Theme: Private Sector Preparedness

Chair: Nichola (Nicky) Hungerford, Communications Officer, OIE - RCU, South East Asian Foot & Mouth Disease Campaign

1400-1420 hrs.

Welcome Address

Today we are focusing on the private sector preparedness. A very important issue, as we continually talk about preparedness in the UN and NGO systems, but rarely do we have the opportunity to coordinate and share information with the private sector directly. Today we hope to learn and exchange experiences and ideas on preparedness and business continuity planning. This month's topic builds on last month's strong presentations on the non-health aspects of pandemic planning. We know HPAI is much wider than a health issue, and the non-health fields and private sectors potentially have a huge role. The private sector is at the heart of our everyday lives, and so learning about their level of preparedness and their plans is the next step in ensuring information flow. We have had consistent presence from some private sectors, like Nestle, who shared with us their activities and plans last year.

Meeting agenda was agreed.

- Participants introduced themselves.
- Participants briefed the group on their organization's AHI activities.

Organizations Present:

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| 1. IFRC | 10. French Red Cross |
| 2. UNSIC | 11. FAO |
| 3. KIAAsia | 12. UNDP |
| 4. IFT | 13. Care |
| 5. UOB | 14. Thai Red Cross |
| 6. Siam Commercial NY Life Insurance | 15. ADPC |
| 7. Roche | 16. WHO fellow from Myanmar via ADPC |
| 8. Nestle | 17. American Red Cross |
| 9. Coverage | 18. EC |

Organization's briefings:

1. **The AHI-NGO-RC/RC Asia Partnership:** This project is now officially launched, and more information can be found in the attached project brief. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of national non-governmental and community-based organizations in Asia active in AHI work. We regard this regional forum as an important part of the proposal, and are looking to optimize the experience of this forum. We all appreciate that IFRC hosts this meeting and this project will facilitate the continuation of this forum. This project intensively focuses on NGO and other partners who can contribute good practice and guidance to the project, and we will be seeking your support to identify best practices for case studies to be included in a toolkit, and are open to NGOs and other partners who can contribute good practices and guidance and hopefully to be optimised for mutual benefit. The steering committee is comprised of ADPC, Care, IFRC, and IRC. Please find more details in the project brief that is being handed out.
2. **UNDP:** The private sector had a regional workshop that brought together a range of private sectors, and various countries in the Asia Pacific region 2 years ago. Whether there has been a formal follow-up is unclear, but the interest in linking to the private sector was high.
3. **AgriSource Company Limited:** a Bangkok-based food and agribusiness consulting company has teamed up with Internews Network to collaborate on a Kenan Institute Asia managed, USAID funded AI education project in Thailand. Internews Network is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that works to improve access to information. The goal of AgriSource and Internews is to use public-

private sector partnerships to educate and increase awareness about Avian Influenza among the rural population who is most at risk from the disease. The focus of this effort is on behavior change communications related to animal and human health. Corporate alliance partnerships have been formed with 22 agribusiness and media companies. These partners consist of poultry producing and processing companies, feed millers, animal health product suppliers, radio and TV networks, and other media groups. The target group is rural populations as they are in direct contact with poultry, which puts them at the greatest risk of contracting human infection with H5N1. They can act as primary agents to control AI in animals and minimize outbreaks. Commercial poultry operators in Thailand have radically changed their production systems and procedures to minimize the opportunity for AI outbreaks. These changes have been well accepted worldwide by governments and importing agents, allowing Thailand to once again be one of the world's largest chicken exporters. Potential AI outbreaks in animals and cases of human infection with H5N1 are more likely to stem from backyard producers, where personal hygiene levels can be low; different types of poultry and animals roam freely and are allowed to mix and have contact with wild fowl; and people don't always report sick birds or birds that die of unusual circumstances. The effectiveness of this education program will be assessed through personal interviews with rural villagers in twenty-one "at-risk" provinces. An initial benchmark survey was carried out by an independent research house in late June, with a follow-up survey to be undertaken in December at the conclusion of the program.

1420-1450 hrs.

Presentation: Influenza Pandemic Preparedness in Business Sector, ABAC Online Survey Outcome, by Dr. Koji Nabae, Avian and Human Influenza Regional Coordinating Officer, UNSIC

- APEC was established in 1989 to enhance economic growth and cooperation within Asia Pacific. With 21 member economies, as they are called, APEC covers more than 50% of global GDP
- The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was created in 1995 by APEC leaders to provide advice on the implementation of the Osaka Action Agenda and on specific business sector priorities, and to provide the business perspective on specific areas of cooperation.
- The activities on Pandemic preparedness in business sector include workshops, list of useful websites and survey. In this regard, the survey highlighted activities aiming to see the status of pandemic preparedness in business sector, to identify and analyze key factors for success in elevating pandemic readiness and to make recommendation on way forward based on lesson learned and best practice. ABAC decided to use what has already available and make those resources more useful and available. The handout has a list of useful websites. Please see attached document.
- The objectives of the survey were to have an web-based survey to gain a snapshot status of pandemic preparedness in business sector, to identify and analyze key factors for success in elevating pandemic readiness in business sector, and to identify recommendations on way forward based on lessons learned and best practices
- This was an On-line survey that included 27 questions to focal points in member economies. A total of 101 business companies replied, and UNSIC did the data gathering and analysis.
- Country, sector, and size of company results can be found in the presentation. Japan, Brunei, and Hong Kong had the most responses, and the financial and 'other' industry includes IT and consulting firms were the largest sectors that responded. Large companies and small-to-medium enterprises (SME) gave the most number of responses.

According to the survey, it can be concluded as following:

- The business that regard business pandemic preparedness plan important are in financial sector and secondary industry. The big companies (more than 5,000 employees) are more prepared than the small companies with less employees (SMEs).
- Most businesses are knowledgeable about avian influenza, mainly from government and media messages, and realise that the pandemic will most likely affect their business.
- About 68% of companies (mostly companies with more than 5,000 employees) have taken their emergency plans (in case of natural disaster, product/service failure, financial crisis for instance) but only 46% have taken *Pandemic Preparedness Plan* because of having risk perception toward the influenza pandemic impact at senior management level and past perception of SARS. The issues covered by their pandemic plans are issues of *employees' health and safety*, critical functions, staff absenteeism, international and external communication strategy, crisis staff, interaction with central or local governments, IT back up, legal, alternative supplied respectively. Staff safety is often covered, but rarely are business continuity or recovery plans included.
- The main reasons of not doing so (mostly SMEs) are various ranging from *lack of information*, lack of time and HR, perception that pandemic has no vital effect on their business to anticipating that pandemic will not occur in the future.

- Only 34% of companies have budget allocated for pandemic preparedness mainly focusing on procuring hand-hygiene supplies whereas few companies purchased or plan to purchase antivirals because of perception that those actions are responsibility of governments and health care facilities.
- Most companies (about 58%) have *no tested plan through simulation exercise*. The briefing method will be their key orientation in case of pandemic.
- The majority of company welcomes the initiative of being provided session that teaches development of pandemic preparedness plans/business continuity plans.
- Almost 90% of respondents would find it helpful if tools became available for promoting pandemic preparedness, and would attend a planning development workshop if available.
- Conclusion: awareness and perception toward risk is high, government and media play major roles in messaging and education, large companies are better prepared than SME primarily due to lack of devoted resources in SME, lack of information and business continuity planning tools were obstacles for preparedness.
- Recommendations for the future: Training workshop targeting SMEs, Advocacy and Training events on BCP - not limited to a flu pandemic, Training on conducting simulation exercises

Q&A

Q: There is clearly a strong need to assist businesses, some more than others, but generally across the board. Where do these recommendations from ABAC go?

A: The recommendations go to the ABAC working group, and we are in dialogue with them. They are not technical agencies so they must work alongside technical counterparts. We are happy to have more partners.

Q: What was the finding that most surprised the UN task force been with the survey conclusion?

A: The survey reconfirmed the assumption SME face more challenges, and some multinational corporations are very well prepared. The challenges still remain - SME face lack of resource and time, so that remains a challenge and SME should be prioritized. We can of course provide opportunities for training and education. Within the UN system, FAO is working closely with the poultry industry, and for the human health for medical care or pharmaceutical industry WHO is closely working with the health sectors, IMF with financial institutions, and UNWTO for travel and hospitality sectors.

Q: Where was the survey from?

A: The survey was disseminated on-line and hence had the limitation of getting denominators

Q: One of the questions asked if AI would significantly affect your business. Was the follow-up question asked, in what way would your business be significantly affected?

A: We did not ask that follow-up question. Our colleagues are trying to look into past pandemics, ie Spanish flu or Hong Kong flu to see if there were any difference in the type of sectors, or other factors that affects private and public sectors.

Q: In Australia, the financial sectors are required by law to have a plan. It would be interesting to know how many of those countries surveyed had legal regulations to have bcp in place?

A: The type of business is crucial factor affecting how much effort the companies will pay to develop a pandemic preparedness plan. Generally, the companies related to finance, IT and consultancy in developed countries will take this issue into account. We did not specifically asked about national legal regulations.

Comment: These results seem to follow the same pattern we have in the poultry sector. The big companies, sectors 1 and 2, are the ones who have developed a plan. And the smaller poultry farms, 3 and 4 sectors, are really the ones that are going to suffer because of no plan in place.

1450-1625 hrs.

Panel Presentation:

- Panel member: Influenza Foundation of Thailand, Dr. Praphasri Jongsuksuntigul
- Panel member: United Overseas Bank (Thai) Ltd., Mr. Sawang Ruwattananon, Vice President, Business Continuity Management Department
- Panel member: Siam Commercial New York Life Insurance PCL., Ms. Patcharaporn Santisevi, Vice President Human Resources Department

Introduction of Influenza Foundation (Thailand) (IFT) Activities on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness for Private Sector in Thailand:

- The Influenza Pandemic Threat was recognized by Thailand, and the first national strategic plan was developed in January 2005 and involved health, public sector and private sector, essential service sector (energy, water supply, transportation).

- IFT's alliance partners range from governmental sector (Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health), corporate partners from private sector, business associations and support organization, resource experts and organizations.
- It gained budget from USAID fund (THB 3,176,200) and alliance partner (THB 4,532,000) for one-year duration (Dec 06-07)
- Goals and objectives are to increase understanding of influenza pandemic risks, to facilitate and support pandemic preparedness planning for business sector, to provide influenza and pandemic planning knowledge via media and to increase the general public knowledge of influenza and control.
- Project components:
 - Raise awareness and capacity building
 - Raising the general public awareness of seasonal and avian influenza
- IFT developed a guideline for pandemic preparedness for business sector comprising of three parts: basic knowledge, preparedness plan for public and private and the annex. It is necessary information for business sector to practice and response in different situation in each unit.
- Template for pandemic preparedness plan for business sector provided content for different issues: steps in planning, example of designed tables and some flow charts diagram of essential activities in company.
- Activities to date include:
 - Alliance Meeting & Press Conference (Feb 16, 07) 66 organizations participated aiming at calling attention of public communication
 - Training for Resource persons (Facilitator) on Feb 28 to March 2, 06 to provide the expertise in facilitate workshop. 38 Participants from banking , food, education, utilities
 - Conference for Strategic Business Sector (April 2, 07) 200 participants with both managerial and operational staff
 - Workshop for Strategic Business Sector (April 3-4, 07) 137 participants
 - Workshop for SMEs & Other Business Sector (June 7-8, 07) 59 participants
 - Pamphlet on AI, TV Program, Information through website: www.ift2004.org providing influenza knowledge
 - Survey to follow-up the workshops
- Next phase: BCP Workshop for sector-specific (Feb 08), Follow-up and refresher workshop for resource persons and ex-participants (March 08), additional workshops by strategic sector, industry or region, activities to neighboring countries, need for funding support from international agencies

Pandemic Response Plan of the United Overseas Bank (UOB)

- Background: UOB is one of leading banks in Thailand with nationwide network of 154 branches, 4,056 staff and over 300 ATMs and in international level with 350 offices in 17 countries.
- UOB Pandemic Response Plan:
 - UOB developed Group Pandemic Response Plan in August 2007 (ongoing process) based on HQ in Singapore with joint effort between Support Units and Critical Business Unit.
 - UOB Pandemic Task Force was assigned. It comprises of six supporting units: Business Continuity Management, Staff Development & Corporate Affairs, HR, IT, General Services and Property Management.
 - The business contingency plan identified responses from each unit is initiated.
 - UOB has secured an alternative office site far from present office, with full office and IT equipment.
 - The awareness training to key staff in Head Office was conducted to equip staff of standard precautions and infection control measures of avian influenza.
- The next step is to conduct walkthrough exercise/simulation aiming at promote familiarity and awareness, validate and improve.
- The UOB will comply with the regulation of the Bank of Thailand to conduct the business contingency plan by next year.

Pandemic Influenza Planning of Siam Commercial New York Life Insurance (SCNYL) PCL.

- Background: Siam Commercial New York Life Insurance (SCNYL) is a joint venture between Siam Commercial Bank and New York Life Insurance. It is the 5th largest life insurance company and the 3rd ranking of new business with 872 staff with 64 branches.
- The SCNYL started the Pandemic Influenza Planning in 2005. Regulation from the NYL alliance, says they must complete their plan by 2008. The procedural phases are:
 - Phase I: Pandemic planning structure & framework
 - Phase II: Communication and Education The organization's news update and news from government or WHO will be communicated by email or newsletter to staff every month.

- Phase III: Optimising employee aiming at encouraging employee wellness and providing seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccination
- Phase IV: Business Continuity (ongoing process)
- The SCNYL's pandemic plan has been underway by identifying responsibilities of each unit during each pandemic stage. It will be finished by next year.

1600-1630 hrs.

Plenary Discussion and Panel Q&A

Q: Could you tell us the background of Business Continuity Management Department?

A: The Business Contingency Management (BCM) Department was separated from Risk Management Department a year ago after the merge of the bank (Asia Bank and UOB of Singapore). The history of BCM Department is different in each country, especially in developing countries like the UK and the US. Basically, the company will consider how big the business is and how much budget they would like to spend to save the business risk.

Q: How much is the budget provided for operation on pandemic preparedness?

A: The HQ in Singapore will subsidize budget for pandemic preparedness according to the bank size.

Q: Have the IFT cooperated with the SMEs for pandemic preparedness plan?

A: The IFT plans to cooperate with the SMEs on this issue next year. So far, Thai SMEs are on process of developing this plan but still lack of understanding. Most companies sent staff from HR and risk management team to attend AI activities.

Q: How can we get best coordination between international organization and private sector?

A: Thailand is a good example to envision that government plays a key role in coordinating with international organization and private sector. According to the information circulated in the meeting, there are a lot of useful websites for influenza pandemic preparedness in business sector. The international organizations try to support collaboration with other sectors as much as possible.

Comment on the history of BCP: The current Business Continuity Planning process grew out of military and government thinking and planning. More recently, major concerns such as the "Year 2000 Computer Bug" and the growing reliance on IT systems in large corporation and government departments has lead to many companies developing Business Continuity Plans to enable rapid recovery in the event of various scenarios. Many companies (particularly stock market listed ones) were forced to develop BCP's in the event that the world went haywire on 1/1/2000 – this was seen as a "prudent practice" and reasonable expectation by shareholders. Soon after this there was a number of well publicized company/accounting collapses and scandals, and also the Dot Com boom/bust.

The US Government passed a law known as SOX (Sarbanes Oxley), which requires stock market listed companies to have appropriate risk management practices in place. A subset of Risk Management is BCP – which basically says there are some risks we can't stop (ie Earthquake) but we should have a plan in place. The requirement for BCP's rapidly expanded in western business thinking.

The UK government extended the concept of SOX with first the Turnbull Report and then acts of parliament which state that most UK companies and government entities are required by law to have some level of BCP and Crisis Management Plan in place, tested and audited.

The Australian and New Zealand governments passed AS/NZ 4360:2004 - this standard for Risk Management is now the accepted model for conducting Risk Management. The most well known and used of these is COSO. Risk Management however it stops short of identifying how an entity should mitigate risk.

Finally last year BS25999 was documented and accepted as the British (and defacto internationally accepted) Standard. With the growing concern over things such as Avian Influenza and Global Warming, one could expect that it will be considered reasonable that all companies, organizations, and government entities should have a BCP.

AOB

- According to the discussion concerning expected low participation in December due to the Thai national holiday the day prior, the AI Coordination Meeting in December will be cancelled. As was the practice last year, the January meeting will also not be held, and these meetings will resume in February.