AVIAN INFLUENZA COMMUNICATION PLAN

March 2006
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**THE STRATEGY**

**Introduction**

The Avian Influenza Communication Plan supports the Avian Influenza Emergency Preparedness Plan for Malawi. It is an integrated plan between animal and human health perspective. The Communication Plan has been formulated on the basis that there is very low awareness and knowledge about Avian Influenza at all levels and is structured against three scenarios:

*Scenario One: Imminent threat - Preparedness and communication*
*Scenario Two: Reported Cases - Detection and prevention*
*Scenario Three: Increase in Cases – Rapid response to contain the outbreak*

**Target Audience**

While communication is aimed at raising awareness to all Malawians, messages are designed to target key stakeholders who have the convening power to mobilise communities. These include: Government Ministries and Departments, Parliamentarians, Local Government Authorities, Religious and other community leaders to cultivate the political will. The second tier of clusters covers the stakeholders in mass communication and community mobilisation.

The campaign focuses on public awareness messages to prevent the introduction of the disease into the country through birds and animals. Through an articulation of messages, clustered audiences will be sensitised on the nature of the disease in birds and humans. The campaign will address speculation and take caution to prevent a state of panic. Effective community mobilisation will enable early detection of suspected cases in animals and humans to avoid an outbreak.

**Barriers to effective Implementation of the Plan**

Ultimately, people should make informed decisions on actions in the event of suspected cases. However, some issues are characteristic of Malawi and pose a threat to the successful implementation of mitigation of the disease. These are:

- Illiteracy level, which impede quick information dissemination through cost effective print material
- Widespread poverty which may cause resistance to intervention through culling, in the event of a outbreak
- Limited resources: The health services are already stretched. National financial resources restrict over ambitious multi-media communication tools.
- Time Constraint: Coupled with limited resources, the unpredictability of the disease puts pressure on a expediency of the campaign.

Under these circumstances, quick and assertive strategies will be required to prevent the spread in the event of reported cases in the country.

**Overall Objective of the Strategy**
The overall objective is to inform and educate the general public in a timely, accurate and consistent manner about avian influenza. The primary communication source will be through the National Task Force on avian influenza in Malawi, which will work closely with Ministries of Agriculture and Food security, Health, Information and Tourism.

**Implementation**

The implementation of this plan will be coordinated by the National Technical Committee (NTC) at national level in liaison with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Information and Tourism, the Poultry Industry Association of Malawi (PIAM). At the district and community levels, Local Assemblies will coordinate implementation. Health, Agriculture and Wildlife extension officers and the police will take a leading role in community mobilisation and surveillance.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The implementation of the Communication Plan will be monitored and reviewed according to set targets and outputs and changes will be made when and where necessary in a bid to ensuring its effective and successful implementation.

**The principles of the campaign are:**

- To draw the attention of communities of the **imminent** threat of bird and pandemic flu
- The solution is to **prevent it** within birds as the primary source of infection
- The campaigns consists of a series of activities to put all (everyone) on full alert, report any suspected cases and contain the situation if cases are confirmed and on the increase.
- Involves a cross section of stakeholders, from top to bottom and across levels
- The message should be positive and not geared to attach a sense of fear and doom.
- The campaign is an opportunity to promote good hygiene practices, which are not limited to the issue of bird flu but general health. This will benefit other disease issues in view of state of poverty among Malawians and limited health and veterinary facilities.
- If communities are well targeted, they will take ownership of the campaign and drive it.
THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. Goal and Objectives

Goal

Prevent bird and pandemic flu from being a catastrophe.

Objectives

a) Create awareness avian influenza across Malawi
b) Empower communities on how to detect the disease among birds and humans
c) Control the spread and mitigate disease impact through culling of affected birds and rapid treatment in humans.

2. Main Message

We can prevent bird flu not to become catastrophic.

Secondary Messages

• Bird flu is a highly infectious disease that mainly afflicts (attacks) birds – domestic and migratory birds
• Bird flu can be transmitted from birds or animals to humans with a potential of an influenza pandemic
• We have to prevent and control the spread of the disease as there is no vaccine and treatment is not readily available.
• There are increasing reports worldwide and we must therefore be prepared to stem its spread.
• If not contained within birds and animals, (farms and wildlife) then trade in poultry and contact with poultry and poultry products (preparation, handling, human-human infection) increases the chances of an influenza pandemic.
• Good hygiene practices can prevent the spread of infection in humans and protect the family from other common disease including cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, scabies and eye infections.

3. Stakeholders Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clustering Objective</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivate political will</td>
<td>Head of State, Ministers and Parliamentarians, Religious and Community leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District mobilisation</td>
<td>Chief Executives/District Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building awareness</td>
<td>NGOs, CBOs, Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection and control of bird flu</td>
<td>Commercial farmers, Smallholder poultry farmers, PIAM and other Livestock Associations, Bird hunters Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass communication on awareness, detection and control</td>
<td>Mainstream(Print and electronic) and alternative media(Cinema and video shows)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strengthen surveillance and mitigation

Health, Agriculture and Wildlife extension workers led by their respective ministries

Detection of pandemic flu and control

Health workers

Building awareness and detection of pandemic flu

Schools and learning institutions

4. Launch

Activity One: Communication Task force

- A communication sub-committee (within the National Technical Committee) (at a national level) will be formed to take charge of information dissemination of a regular basis.

Activity Two: Emergency Hotline

Through advocacy with the private sector, a toll-free information hotline will be established. The private sector including the communication service providers, namely Celtel Malawi Limited, Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM) and Malawi Telecommunications Limited (MTL) will be encouraged to sponsor the cost of the hotline as well as the training of response unit team. The hotline is a quick information source for clarification or reporting suspecting cases.

At the same time, the official spokespersons on Avian Influenza in the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Livestock Development and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife will continue updating the members of the general public. Parks and It is a Celtel, TNM and MTL ground lines.

Activity Three: Presidential briefing

The success of a quick hit campaign is dependent on political will. This campaign will be presented to the President to receive his endorsement and enable a trickle effect to Government Ministries and Departments. He will be briefed by the Ministers of Information, Health and Agriculture, Inspector General of Police and Local Government representative.

Activity Four: Leadership

Hospital and Primary Education Advisors
Parliamentary Briefing
District Assembly Chief Executives Briefing
Religious leaders and heads of Business Associations
MRA

5. Mass Media

Activity Five: Mass media

Media Heads briefing
Press Conference
Pre-positioning of posters and flyers at local level
Negotiation for Short messaging service
Activity Six: Community Mobilisation

Public outreach is highly dependent on extension workers, head teachers, religious fora and community meetings.
District Assemblies meet with Extension Workers and mobilised
Heads of schools and learning institutions brief schools
Hospitals and health centre are reached
Religious leaders discussing this at meetings
Television and Radio Promos (programmes) running
Road shows running
Livestock and bird hunters Associations and PIAM meeting with their members
Mobile cinema on the road
NGOs involved
### Annex 1: The Communication Plan

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>IN-PUT</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</th>
<th>PARTNERS</th>
<th>OUTPUT</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-testing of messages</td>
<td>Graphic artist Facilitation Transport Stationery</td>
<td>By 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>CIO-Publications</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>10 Messages produced</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Printing IEC materials</td>
<td>Contract-out to printers</td>
<td>By 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>CIO-Publications</td>
<td>UNICEF FAO USAID MOIT</td>
<td>30000 fact sheets 60000 Leaflets 25000 Posters 20000 Flyers</td>
<td>K600,000.00 K1,200,000.00 K1,250,000.00 K400,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Distribution of IEC materials</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>From 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April On-going</td>
<td>CIO-Publications</td>
<td>MOIT MOA MOH</td>
<td>Materials distributed to stakeholders</td>
<td>K200,000.00</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Briefing sessions</td>
<td>Facilitators, Fact sheets, flyers and Posters</td>
<td>By 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>Chairman NTC</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>197 MPs briefed Awareness created among MPs</td>
<td>K15,000.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Government ministries and departments (Health,</td>
<td>Facilitators, Fact sheets, flyers and Posters</td>
<td>By 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>Chairman NTC</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>Awareness created among Government officials</td>
<td>K15,000.000</td>
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<td>Agriculture, Information and Tourism, Trade, MRA, Police, Army, Ministry of Justice, NGOs, Universities, Ministry of Education, Gender and others).</td>
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<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
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<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Operational costs</td>
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<td>private sector Areas of collaboration identified and agreed</td>
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<td>• Local Assembly (District, Town, City)</td>
<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
<td>By 30th May</td>
<td>Chairman NTC MOIT MOA MOH</td>
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<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
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<td>Chairman NTC MOIT MOA MOH</td>
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<td>• Extension workers (HSA, Police, MRA, agriculture, Wildlife and CDAs)</td>
<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
<td>DDAH MOIT MOA MOH DNPW</td>
<td>Local Assembly members oriented In 40 Assemblies K7,576,200.00</td>
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<td>• Health workers</td>
<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
<td>By 30th May</td>
<td>DPHS MOIT MOA MOH</td>
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<td>• Port of entry workers</td>
<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
<td>By 15th June</td>
<td>DDAH MOIT MOA MOH DNPW</td>
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<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
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<td>1400 health workers oriented K417,500.00</td>
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<td>5 Airports and 15 Border Posts briefed K350,000.00</td>
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<td>• Wild Bird Hunters</td>
<td>Fact sheets, Posters, Leaflets, T-shirts and caps</td>
<td>By 30(^{th}) May</td>
<td>DNPW</td>
<td>MOIT MOA MOH</td>
<td>240 wild hunters briefed</td>
<td>K300,000.00</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Production of Jingles</td>
<td>Contract-out to private companies (Finances)</td>
<td>By 30(^{th}) May</td>
<td>CIO Publications</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>2 radio &amp; 4 TV jingles produced</td>
<td>K300,000.00</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Airing of Jingles</td>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>From 1(^{st}) June</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>Jingles aired on TVM, MBC, Capital Radio, Transworld Radio and Zodiak.</td>
<td>K1,727,200.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Production of Radio and TV Programmes: Phone-ins, round table discussions, guest speakers</td>
<td>Contract-out to private companies</td>
<td>By 30th April On-going</td>
<td>CIO-Publications</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>TV and Radio programmes</td>
<td>K1,135,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Conduct Social Mobilisation campaigns</td>
<td>Resource persons</td>
<td>From April 1 On-going</td>
<td>Chairperson NTC CIO-Publications</td>
<td>MOA MOH MOIT USAID UNICEF WHO FAO</td>
<td>Campaign conducted in 28 districts</td>
<td>K7,576,200.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2: Key Messages and Communication Channels (Tools

a) Question and Answer on Bird Flu

What is avian influenza?

Avian influenza, or “bird flu”, is a contagious disease of animals caused by viruses that normally infect only birds and, less commonly, pigs. Avian influenza viruses are highly species-specific, but have, on rare occasions, crossed the species barrier to infect humans.

In domestic poultry, infection with avian influenza viruses can present with the following clinical signs:
- Severe depression
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen combs and wattles
- Bluish discoloration of wattles and combs
- Discharges from mouth and nose.
- Drastic decline in egg production
- High mortality
- Blood stained loose droppings.

How is the disease transmitted?

The bird flu can be transmitted through:
- Direct contact with infected birds.
- Contact with faeces or any discharges of infected birds.
- Contaminated feed, water, equipment and clothing.
- Airborne transmission may occur if birds are in close proximity and with appropriate air movement
- Exposure is considered most likely during slaughter, defeathering, butchering, and preparation of poultry for cooking. There is no evidence that properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection.

Do migratory birds spread bird flu viruses?

Clinically normal waterfowl and sea birds may introduce the virus into flocks. Most outbreaks probably start with direct or indirect contact of domestic poultry with water birds.

Why is the disease of concern?

Bird flu is very infectious and causes high deaths rate in the birds

It can result in marked economic losses to a country. It can spread to human beings and the disease is very fatal in humans.
What are the implications for human health?

The first is the risk of direct infection when the virus passes from poultry to humans, resulting in very severe disease. Unlike normal seasonal influenza, where infection causes only mild respiratory symptoms in most people, the disease caused by bird flu virus follows a very aggressive clinical course, with high fatality. Primary viral pneumonia and multi-organ failure are common.

A second risk, of even greater concern, is that the virus – if given enough opportunities – will change into a form that is highly infectious for humans and spreads easily from person to person. Such a change could mark the start of a global outbreak (a pandemic).

What about the risk for a global outbreak (pandemic)?

Currently there the bird flu virus spreads from birds to humans; there is no evidence of human to human transmission of the virus. There is a possibility the virus may mutate and be able to spread from human to human. Once that happens a global outbreak or pandemic will occur.

How serious is the current pandemic risk?

The risk of pandemic influenza is serious and will persist if the spread of bird flu continues among the poultry population.

What can one do to protect oneself and family from bird flu?

- Avoid touching dead or ill birds directly or surfaces contaminated by secretions or faeces from these birds without adequate protection.
- If such contact is made, then one should wash their hands and body surfaces exposed to the infected bird with soap and water.
- Avoid keeping chickens in the household
- Where possible it is also wise to avoid visiting poultry raising areas and never eat uncooked or undercooked poultry.
- The anti-viral drug Tamiflu may be effective in preventing disease if taken soon after exposure
- It is not prescribed unless a person has probably been exposed to avian influenza

Is there a vaccine against bird flu?

Currently there are no vaccines effective against a possible pandemic virus.
b) Leaflet on Bird Flu

Introduction

Bird flu is a disease of birds caused by a virus. The disease can lead to massive deaths and can also affect humans.

Signs of bird flu in birds

- Severe depression
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen combs and wattles
- Bluish discoloration of wattles and combs
- Discharges from mouth and nose.
- Drastic decline in egg production
- Deaths
- Blood stained loose droppings.

Mode of transmission

- Direct contact with infected birds.
- Contact with faeces or any discharges of infected birds.
- Contaminated feed, water, equipment and clothing.
- Airborne transmission may occur if birds are in close proximity and with appropriate air movement

Prevention and Control

- Strict movement control of poultry and poultry products and wild birds.
- Report all sick or dead birds to veterinary stations
- Destruction of all clinically affected and all birds which are in close contact with the sick birds
- Disinfection of infected and affected premises
- Avoid touching dead or sick birds or surfaces contaminated by secretions or faeces from these birds without adequate protection.
- Wash hands with soap and water if exposed to the infected bird or after handling raw poultry or eggs.
- Avoid sharing a house with chickens.
- All foods from poultry, including eggs and poultry blood, should be cooked thoroughly.
c) Poster on Clinical signs of Bird flu

Do your chickens have any of these signs?

*Kodi nkhuku zanu zili ndi zizindikiro izi za matenda?*

- Swollen combs and wattles
- *Lipombo ndi makutu otupa*
- Bluish coloration of wattles and combs
- *Lipombo ndi makutu obiriwira*
- Discharge from mouth and nose
- *Zikutuluka mamina, madzi kapena mamina kukamwa ndi m’mphuno*
- Sudden death and high mortality
- *Nkhuku zikufa mwadzidzidzi kapena zambiri zikufa nthawi imodzi*

These could be signs of bird flu which is a highly infectious disease affecting birds.

*Zimenezi zitha kukhala zizindikiro za matenda a chimfine cha mbalame omwe ndi oopsa kwambiri*

Immediately report to the nearest veterinary, wildlife, health workers or police station.

*Kaneneni msanga kwa alangizi a zaziweto, a nyama zakutchire, a za umoyo kapena ku polisi ya m’dera lanu*

Do not handle birds or their droppings with your bare hands. If you come into contact wash your hands thoroughly and keep children away from the birds or its droppings.

*Musagwire mbalame kapena zitosi zake ndi manja. Ngati mutakhudzana ndi nkhuku yodwala sambani m’manja msanga ndipo musalole ana kukhala pafupi ndi nkhuku kapena zitosi kutinagatenge matenda.*

Keep chicken away from your sleeping and eating areas.

*Musasunge nkhuku kkuchipinda chogona kapena malo odyera.*
d) Poster on Consumption of dead chickens or birds

**Do not eat chickens or birds found dead!!!**
Musadye mbalame kapena nkhuku zomwe zafa zokha!!!

*(Picture of a man picking dead bird in forest- to be crossed)*

To avoid contracting bird flu, a highly infectious disease of birds which can also affect humans.
*Kuti mupewe matenda a Chimfine cha mbalame* omwe ndi oopsa kwambiri ndipo angathe kugwiranso anthu


e) Poster on indiscriminate trade of poultry and poultry products

**Stop bird flu!!!**
Pewani matenda a Chimfine cha mbalame!!!

*( Picture of person buying chickens in market and along roads)*

Avoid buying of poultry and poultry products from unregistered hatcheries or outlets.
*Musagule nkhuku, nyama ya nkhuku kapena mazira kumalo owetera nkhuku osavomerezeka ndi Boma*
f) Poster on risk from migratory birds

**AVOID BIRD FLU**

*PEWANI MATENDA A CHIMFINE CHA MBALAME*

*(Picture of Flying Birds)*

These wild birds may be infected with bird flu  
*Mbalame izi zitha kukhala ndi tizirombo toyambitsa matenda a chimfine cha mbalame*

- When they show signs of sickness
- *Ngati zisonyeza kuti zikudwala*
  - Do not handle sick or eat them
  - *Musazigwire kapena kuzipha kuti mudye*
  - Report any sick or dead birds to nearest veterinary National parks and wildlife authorities, or police
  - *Kaneneni msanaga kwa alangizi a za ziweto, a za nyama zakutchire, a za umoyo kapena kupolisi yomwe muli nayo pafupimukaona nkhuku kapena mbalame yodwala kapena yofa yokha cifukwa mwina nkutheka kuti ikudwala chimfine cha mbalame*