

ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

Disaster Preparedness and Pandemic Disease

Sponsored by Indonesia, Mexico and New Zealand

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASIA PACIFIC
PARLIAMENTARY FORUM,

Reaffirming the APPF member countries' commitments on the need to prevent and overcome the spread of avian influenza made during the 14th and 15th annual meetings of the APPF;

Taking note of the 2007 Progress Report of the World Health Organization (WHO), which emphasizes the increasing threats at unprecedented rates to global public health security, and the recent resolutions on enhancing capacity-building in global public health adopted at the United Nations General Assembly;

Noting that the Asia-Pacific region has had the most widespread cases of avian influenza to date, and has an increasing issue with infection rates of HIV/AIDS;

Deeply concerned about the continuing natural and human-made hazards and disasters in many regions of the world that claim thousands of human casualties and cause incalculable infrastructure damage, and the destruction which has brought deep and direct impacts to the economy of the countries affected and the region;

Deeply concerned about the effects that climate change and the increase of natural disasters could have on health conditions around the world, and well aware that the frequency of epidemics can increase as a consequence of hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, typhoons, and ocean waves; and aware that environmental changes can worsen the location, spread and intensity of transmittable diseases by insects via water;

Deeply concerned by the lack of national and international preparation to face pandemic disease, including its social and economic effects;

Emphasizing that the centuries-old global public health threats such as pandemic influenza, malaria, tuberculosis, dengue, yellow fever, malaria, and Nile western virus continue to pose threats to health through a combination of mutation, rising resistance to antibiotic medicines, and undeveloped health systems, as well as acknowledging problems linked to potential biological and chemical terrorist attacks and radio-nuclear accidents;

Alarmed by today's global vulnerability to the threats of new emerging forms of diseases, which could mutate through human-to-human contact and spread rapidly due to the high mobilization of people; **expressing our greatest concern** regarding the high death rates linked to diseases that proliferate among poor populations due to their deficient nutritional and sanitary conditions, as well as their limited access to proper health services; and **remembering** that according to WHO the changes in climatic conditions, non-planned urbanization, difficulties in water supply, and increase of air traffic, added to the lack of sound mosquito control programs, the scarcity of insecticides which have a good cost/benefit ratio, and the lack of sanitary education, are some of the factors linked to the spreading of these diseases;

Stressing also the importance of closer cooperation in combating avian influenza and in research, response exercises, and vaccines development, as well as the equal distribution of vaccines among countries;

Recognising that preparations for pandemics on a national level require input and close cooperation from a range of national agencies, and must be tailored to each country's unique needs;

RESOLVES TO:

1. **Encourage** APPF members and agencies such as WHO and FAO to work together closely on strategies to prevent the spread of avian influenza;
2. **Call upon** APPF members to foster closer cooperation in combating avian influenza by taking steps such as collaborating in vaccines development and its equal distribution among countries, and utilization of legitimate sources of influenza virus sample and its mutation strands (eg H5NI) to develop such vaccines;
3. **Call upon** APPF members to develop national standards and share information around chemical control mechanisms, and fumigation of airplanes and ships originating in endemic waters and of all international airlines, in accordance with corresponding international agreements; and to ensure a sufficient supply of the chemicals required;
4. **Call on** all APPF members to strengthen cooperation in surveillance and pandemic outbreak alert and response, as well as to enhance global responsibility for capacity building on public health;
5. **Urge** all APPF members to design and develop a preparedness plan for a potential outbreak of a major pandemic, including avian influenza and HIV/AIDS, and to develop public education on disaster management at all levels of society;

6. **Urge** all APPF members to fund national centres entrusted to prevent these diseases and to give support to the research and development of vaccines and anti-virals to counter transmittable diseases;
7. **Call** the APPF members to evaluate the morbidity burden and the economic impact of annual epidemics of these diseases as a basis for formulating and applying a preventive policy in the context of national health priorities;
8. **Call on** all APPF members to coordinate with their respective governments to take further steps to ensure continuity of vital infrastructure in pandemic contingency and to launch continuous communication campaigns to raise awareness of the threats of emerging new forms of diseases;
9. **Encourage** all APPF members to urge their respective governments to empower professionals and experts in the field of health, environment, food safety and crisis management to work together at national and regional levels to ensure that the Asia-Pacific region is well prepared to overcome problems arising from pandemic diseases;
10. **Appeal to** all APPF members to make sure that their respective governments improve mitigation programs including vulnerability analysis and risk assessment and warning systems, as well as citizenship preparedness, providing infrastructure for emergency operations, activating traditional and modern alert systems.