

ISSUES NOTE

ECOSOC SPECIAL EVENT ON “THE AVIAN FLU”

THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2005

AVIAN INFLUENZA: A CALL TO ACTION

Background

The risk of another influenza pandemic is now greater than at any time since 1968, when the last of the previous century's three pandemics began. This risk is directly linked to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza, caused by the H5N1 strain, in poultry. The outbreaks that have affected Asian poultry since mid-2003 are th

and providing mechanisms to decrease the contact between wild birds and raised poultry (i.e., nets or proper housing).

- Use of quality assured vaccines and effective vaccination campaigns, where needed.
- Improved hygiene and inspection at markets.
- Control of animal movements at internal and international borders.
- Undertaking risk assessments, including those associated with formal (imports, poultry exhibits, cock-fighting) and informal practices (non-inspected local slaughter, border exchange and traffic, cock-fighting).
- Enabling legislation that includes access and intervention by the veterinary authorities and the execution of pre-funded contingency plans.

WHO constantly monitors the evolving situation for changes in the epidemiology of the disease and, through its network of

A co-ordinated approach will be necessary to make the international system as responsive as possible and to ensure common strategies and joint action within th