

**FOR INFORMATION**

SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Other questions**Project on avian flu and the workplace**

1. At the invitation of the Advisory Body on Agriculture, Mr Donato Kiniger-Passigli (ILO/CRISIS), provided an overview of recent developments with regard to ILO work on avian flu pandemic preparedness. At its 297th Session (November 2006), the Governing Body approved the report and conclusions of the workshop “Avian flu and the workplace”,¹ concluding that avian and human influenza preventive action involving workers’ rights and occupational safety and health (OSH) was particularly relevant to the ILO’s field of operations.
2. The ILO has played an active role within the United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSCIC), where it has drawn the attention of the inter-agency working group to the employment consequences of avian flu and urged the involvement of employers’ and workers’ organizations in the development of national action plans. An ILO avian flu task force composed of representatives of the Bureaux of Employers’ and Workers’ Activities technical units was set up to solicit proposals from ILO constituents in line with the strategic objectives of the UN Consolidated Action Plan for Contributions of the UN System and Partners (UNCAPAHI). The ILO put forward proposals in the areas of sustaining livelihoods, human health, public information and communication to support behaviour change, and continuity under pandemic conditions for a total of US\$2,450,000.
3. The “ILO avian flu and the workplace” project was approved by the UN Central Fund for Influenza Action in July 2007 for the total requested amount of US\$250,000. Funding was released in October 2007 to carry out the first project in four provinces in Thailand. The poultry industry was selected as a strategic sector within which to begin work due to its potential role as a key transmission point, and in light of the massive financial losses incurred when outbreaks occur. The project goal is twofold: to promote best workplace practices in poultry production to limit the effects of avian flu; and to encourage behaviour change through awareness raising, capacity building and training activities on preventive and protective measures in the workplace. The project targets an estimated 150,000 poultry workers in Thailand, both at the farm level through small enterprises and the informal sector as well as through large-scale commercial poultry-processing companies. A communication campaign for local communities will also be launched. The project will be

¹ GB.297/19/5.

implemented jointly by the ILO and the International Union of Food Workers (IUF). Once the methodology has been successfully tested in Thailand, and subject to additional funding, the project will be replicated in Indonesia, where a national pandemic preparedness plan is currently under preparation. The model plan could later be adapted to other national and regional contexts.

Geneva, 29 October 2007.

Submitted for information.