

**Statement by Ambassador Siv, U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council: Special Event on Avian Influenza
November 3, 2005**

Thank you Mr President for hosting this meeting on the very urgent issue of preparing for the possibility of an influenza pandemic. As we have just heard from the panel, affected countries must ensure rapid and timely responses to all outbreaks of pandemic potential, particularly if we were to contain the virus at its source. Non-affected states must increase their understanding of the threat and prepare for it.

The United States is determined to deal with public health threats such as this one, in close collaboration with other countries and relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector partners. If unchallenged, a human influenza pandemic arising from H5N1 avian flu would become a clear and present danger across health, economic, social, and political sectors.

On November 1, President Bush released the United States National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza. It can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov. This strategy will guide my government in finalizing its pandemic preparedness. We urge all countries to put national plans in place immediately and to coordinate closely with their neighbors.

President Bush is seeking \$251 million from Congress as part of the our contribution to the international effort to combat avian and pandemic influenza. Last May, the United States made available an emergency \$25 million fund to prevent and control the spread of avian flu in affected countries. Over the past year, we have also provided \$5.5 million in technical assistance and grants to affected areas in Southeast Asia and to the World Health Organization (WHO) for influenza pandemic preparedness.

In his address to the General Assembly on September 14, 2005, President Bush spoke to the dangers of avian influenza, and launched the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI). He asked affected countries “to immediately share

information and provide samples to the World Health Organization.” He pointed out that “By requiring transparency, we can respond more rapidly to dangerous outbreaks and stop them on time.”

Mr. President, the activities of the United Nations and its new Senior Coordinator, Dr. David Nabarro, and of the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), are central to the global effort to prevent an outbreak. The International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) has sought to elevate the issue on national agendas and give political momentum to technical efforts that are already underway. In its first meeting of senior officials in Washington, October 6-7, the partnership identified the need for further work on issues of stockpiles, response and containment, and vaccine development, production capacity and distribution.

Establishing clear protocols for when and how the international community would intervene to try to contain incipient human-to-human transmission of H5N1 or a similar strain was a key element of the discussions at the Global Pandemic Influenza Readiness meeting in Ottawa, October 24-25. Response and containment were central themes at the recent APEC symposium on Preparedness and Response, in Brisbane. Next week’s meeting in Geneva, cosponsored by the WHO, FAO, OIE, and the World Bank, will be an opportunity to collaborate further on key issues that can greatly benefit from global cooperation.

Thank you.