

**INTERVENTION BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LE LUONG MINH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF VIET NAM AT THE SPECIAL EVENT
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

ON AVIAN FLU

New York, 03 November 2005

Mr. President,

I thank you for organizing this Special Event which my Delegation considers very useful and timely. I thank the panelists for their important contributions. For the time constraints, I will limit my intervention on two major aspects of the issue under discussion: our national response and our approach to international co-operation. In my view, the two are mutually complimentary. There are components of our national response strategies whose success depends on the level of international co-operation.

Viet Nam's response to outbreaks and progress achieved:

The response of the Vietnamese Government to the threat of Avian Influenza to date has been proactive with lessons learned from the experience gained in 2003 when different Vietnamese agencies worked effectively to control the SARS outbreak. A National Steering Committee for Bird Flu Prevention and Control was established. Under the guidance of the Committee, immediate measures have been undertaken and a long-term strategy has been worked out.

The Immediate measures include:

- Quick containment of affected areas and killing of all poultry in such areas with a revised plan of compensation for farmers ; disinfection of poultry farms in such areas;

- Enhancement of bio-security and control of movement of poultry. A ban on the importation of assorted poultry and ornamental birds from 1st November 2005 to 31st March 2006 has been imposed;

- Implementation of a large-scale campaign of vaccination of domestic poultry and waterfowls. Last week, the National Steering Committee for Bird Flu

Control and Prevention ordered localities nationwide to speed up and conclude by no later than November 2005 the plan of vaccination of their fowls and disinfection of the environment. According to the latest statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 32 out of 61 provinces and cities have completed the first round of mass poultry vaccination. The Government has ordered the creation of a reserve of Tamiflu doses and breathing machines

Our long-term strategy has the following components:

- Promoting an information, communication and education campaign based on transparency and accuracy;

- Ensuring early warning of a pandemic outbreak and building a national network of surveillance and preparedness;

- Strengthening national capacity in managing public health emergencies with a particular focus on avian flu by accelerating the establishment of a national reserve of antivirals with a view to ensuring an effective containment;

- Improving information exchange.

Thanks to the vigorous efforts of the Government of Viet Nam and the support and assistance of the international community, the epidemic is now under control in Viet Nam with no bird flu outbreaks reported in September and October 2005. At the recent two-day health conference in Ottawa, Canada, the progress achieved and the experience learned from Viet Nam's efforts in fighting avian flu was widely recognized by the participants leading to further commitments of continued co-operation and assistance.

International co-operation and assistance:

There is no doubt that a flu pandemic would have global consequences. No nation can afford to ignore this threat, and every nation has responsibility to detect and stop its spread. For the possibility of a global outbreak, international cooperation and assistance is of critical importance. We think a good lesson can be drawn from the global fight against SARS. We wish to emphasize the necessity and significance of the participation of advanced countries and international

organizations, especially the specialized agencies within the UN system such as WHO, FAO, UNDP. In this connection, we share the view on the necessity of enhanced co-ordination between the affected countries, donor countries and the international organizations and UN agencies. Within the UN framework, we welcome the recent appointment of the Senior UN System Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza. As an early supporter of UNDAF, we see a significant role for the UN Development Group in coordinating an effective joint response. Likewise, we share the importance of the participation of other stockholders such as the private sector and the NGO's. The Vietnamese guiding approach to international co-operation and assistance is one of transparency and responsibility. We specially appreciate the role and contributions of WHO.

We are of the view that international co-operation and assistance should be focused on undertaking joint research, sharing information, building an effective early warning network, providing vaccines or transferring technologies for production of such vaccines, building capacity for the health systems of affected countries in particular and developing countries in general by way of training staff, providing necessary equipments, especially laboratories serving avian flu prevention and eradication, and technical and financial assistance.

As far as frameworks for co-operation are concerned, Viet Nam welcomes the creation of international, regional and sub-regional frameworks for co-operation in this connection and is ready to participate in joint efforts. We welcome and support the New International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza initiated by United States President George W. Bush at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly last September. We note with pleasure that 88 countries and nine international organizations have joined the partnership and participated in the recent first meeting organized in Washington. We also welcome the Declaration on Partnership in Combating Avian Influenza and Other Infectious Diseases adopted at the 2nd Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (**ACMECS**) Summit just concluded in Bangkok with the participation of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam. The Declaration calls for strengthening regional

collaboration for pandemic preparedness through exchange of information and experts; vaccine research and development capacity; establishment of sub-regional and regional stockpiles of antiviral drugs. ASEAN, ASEM and APEC will continue to engage in efforts aimed at containing and eradicating the avian flu outbreak. We are committed to continued common endeavors in this connection.

Mr. President,

Finally, let me conclude my short intervention by expressing our sincere gratitude to WHO, UNDP, FAO and the Governments of the United States, Denmark, the Netherlands, Japan, Australia, Finland, Luxemburg, Canada and others for their timely and valuable assistance.

I thank you for your attention!