



**Regional Update: Influenza A/H1N1 Pandemic**  
**Date: 13 May 2009**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- ✓ **Zambia is the only country with one unsuspected case of Influenza A.**
- ✓ **South Africa, laboratory tests for the two suspected cases came back negative**

**REGIONAL CONTEXT**

Zambia is the only country with one unsuspected case of Influenza A. In South Africa, laboratory tests for the four suspected cases came back negative.

All countries in the region are on high-alert for a potential outbreak of the virus and are revising and /or updating their Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plans.

On Wednesday, 29 April 2009, the WHO raised its pandemic alert for Influenza A to Phase 5 in a six-phase preparedness plan. Phase 5 is the second highest alert level, meaning there is a sustained human-to-human spread in at least two countries. In addition, the alert shows that the WHO believes a global outbreak of the disease is imminent. The increased alert level also signals that efforts to produce a vaccine will be increased.

Currently, the National Institute for Communicable Disease, Respiratory Virus Unit (NICD) is providing testing for all suspected cases of novel influenza A/H1N1 for South Africa and as required for the African continent. Testing includes an initial real-time PCR for influenza A and B followed by sub-typing of influenza A for all positive samples.

**Angola**

**UN Preparedness** - There are no reports of the H1N1 Influenza. WHO is closely monitoring the situation and daily updates are disseminated to all UN agencies, Government and humanitarian partners and donors. The UNCT is pre-positioning Tamiflu and protective equipment. In addition to Tamiflu, the UNCT placed an order of 1,600 seasonal flu vaccines for the immunization of all staff members and dependents. On 30 April 2009, the Office of the Resident Coordinator, organized a town hall meeting with UN agencies to brief all staff on the technical aspects and characteristics of the virus as well as preventive measures.

**Support to Government** - **The Angolan government has established an Inter-Ministerial commission, coordinated by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture to prevent and control the possible spread of the H1N1 virus in the country.** The government is updating the contingency plan in compliance with WHO standards to improve surveillance at airports, maritime and road borders to detect, isolate and prevent the possible entry into the country of people who are affected by the disease. Additional priority activities include coordination and training on case management as well as laboratory testing.

## Botswana

**UN Preparedness** – The Ministry of Health and WHO has established a National Rapid Response Team and four technical teams on 28 April 2009. Surveillance strengthening is needed at airports as well as for domestic and wild animals. Procurement of protective equipment is being undertaken.

**Support to Government** - The Ministry of Health (MoH) conducting an inventory of medical supplies for the treatment of the virus. Guidelines for home-based care treatment are also being developed, should hospitals capacity become overstretched.

## Lesotho

**UN Preparedness - The UN Task Force for Pandemic Influenza was activated to review and update its Contingency Plan** according to the Multi-sectoral (Whole of Society) approach. Additionally, the Task Force is developing its Business Continuity plan should critical staff fall ill, thereby enabling critical programmes to continue. The Task Team has also conducted an inventory of current vaccine stocks for Tamiflu and protective equipment. Current stock can cover 41% of staff. Approximately US\$8,000 is needed to increase current stocks to meet shortfalls. A meeting was held with UN agencies to brief all staff on the technical aspects and characteristics of the virus as well as preventive measures such as hygiene promotion.

**Support to Government** - To assist the Government in preparedness and response capacity, WHO supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in conducting orientation sessions to District Epidemic Preparedness and Response Teams on case surveillance and management. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials have also been produced and disseminated via the local print and broadcast media.

FAO provided technical guidance and information to the Department of Livestock for surveillance of pigs. FAO will also provide support, if needed, for shipping any samples for laboratory testing. Training for animal personnel was conducted for the detection and collection of samples. The Department of Livestock is also in the process of developing a public awareness campaign on animal health.

## Madagascar

### **UNCT Preparedness / Support to Government:**

#### **1. Safety of staff and assets under their authority:**

- Sensitization of the Heads of the UN Agencies commenced on 28 April 2009
- Information and awareness-raising of all UN staff through:
  1. Dissemination of information material to all agencies and public posting in the main hall of UN House;
  2. Organization of information sessions for each agency coordinated by WHO (as from 5 May, 2009).
- Inventory of stock of medicines such as Tamiflu and personal protective equipment (PPE).
  1. In the UN clinic
  2. At the level of each agency.
- (\*) Health and safety of UN staff: replenishing of stocks (Tamiflu, other medicines, vaccines, PPE, by the UN clinic committee)
- Review of the Contingency Plan elaborated in 2006 for Avian Influenza, coordinated by the Resident Coordinator.

#### **2. Continuity of critical operations:**

(\*) Updating and/or elaboration of a Business Continuity Plan by each Agency, which was coordinated by the OMT for a One UN Business Continuity Plan.

#### **3. Support to national authorities:**

- Alert letter to the Ministry of Health sent by WHO during the week of 26 April 2009;
- Dissemination of information to the media on 8 May 2009, which was coordinated by WHO and UNIC.

- (\*)Whole of society approach/critical sectors: Technical and financial assistance for updating the national preparedness and contingency plan for avian influenza, carried out during a 3-day workshop (6-8 May 2009), with UNOCHA, FAO, UNICEF and WHO participation.
- (\*) Special SMT meeting on 7 May 2009: joint programming of emergency actions for the next days

## Malawi

**UN Preparedness** – The UN Avian and Human Influenza Task Force met on 30 April 2009, to assess the status of preparedness in the UN System. Based on the meeting, all UN agencies are reviewing their current stocks of medical and non-medical supplies. Business continuity plans are also being revised and updated. UN Agency AHI Focal Points were asked to brief staff in their respective agencies on the basic information about H1N1 i.e symptoms, personal hygiene, how to deal with suspected cases.

**Support to Government** - The Government of Malawi has activated the national contingency plan, developed an action plan with the technical assistance of UN Agencies lead by WHO and speed up the registration of Tamiflu. The Office for the Resident Coordinator has supported the Government to develop public information material on the H1N1 Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials for the media on the technical aspects and characteristics of the virus as well as preventive measures.

## Mauritius

**UN Preparedness** – UNDP and WHO are currently updating the UNCT Pandemic influenza Contingency Plan, previously reviewed in July 2008, during an OCHA mission. The Office of the Resident Coordinator has sent information to all UN staff about the symptoms of the virus as well as on preventive measures.

**Support to Government** - **WHO has disseminated information regarding the technical aspects of the disease as well as measures to strengthen case surveillance and case management to the Ministry of Health (MoH). The MoH has also increased the procurement of Tamiflu to ensure access to wide a population as necessary should an outbreak occur.**

## Mozambique

**UN Preparedness** – The UN Country Team met on 7 May 2009 to assess the country's level of preparedness. Based on the meeting, the UN Contingency Plan for influenza pandemic was activated. Tamiflu and protective equipment stocks are being updated by all agencies. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were disseminated via the media to increase public awareness.

WHO established a National Task Force comprised of four technical task teams, namely: Surveillance, Logistics; Case Management and Laboratory Testing as well as Health promotion/Media. The National Task Team is led by WHO Representative to support the MoH. UNICEF will be pre-positioning Tamiflu for UN staff and dependents.

**Support to Government** – **Mozambique has placed its ports of entry on high alert and case surveillance is ongoing. WHO has disseminated information on the technical aspects and characteristics of the virus as well as preventive measures. In addition, WHO has provided technical guidance on measures to strengthen case surveillance and management. Pre-positioning of Tamiflu and protective equipment for selected hospitals is currently being undertaken by WHO.**

The UN System is also providing technical expertise to update the national contingency plan for pandemic influenza.

## Seychelles

**UN Preparedness** - The UN is currently updating its Contingency Plan. To facilitate this process, UNDP has requested support from the Regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Southern Africa (OCHA ROSA) to hold a table-top simulation exercise on pandemic influenza preparedness, which is expected to take place early June 2009.

**Support to Government** – WHO informed the Ministry of Health (MoH) as well as all health facilities including private practitioners of the case definition of the H1N1 virus.

The Government is finalizing a proposal to be submitted to the UN agencies based in Seychelles to seek immediate supports such as production and printing of Information, Education and Communication materials and training.

## South Africa

**UN Preparedness** – The UNCT has activated the Technical Committee on pandemic influenza to update the contingency plan. The task force meets weekly and a town hall meetings were organized for UN Staff based in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The Regional Director Team has been briefed as well.

The Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (RIACSO) called for an extraordinary meeting to revise the regional Pandemic preparedness plan. RIASCO has put in place a task force to update the contingency plan.

**Current Situation and actions taken by the Government** - As of 7 May 2009 there have been no laboratory confirmed cases of novel influenza A/H1N1 in South Africa. Four cases meeting the suspected case definition have been tested. Tests for novel influenza A/H1N1 infection were negative in all four cases. Two of these cases, from the Free State and Gauteng provinces respectively, were confirmed to have infection with seasonal influenza H3N2.

As South Africa is the hub of different airlines in Southern Africa, the Government has taken the threat seriously by taking various measures such as installing thermal screening at Lanseria Airport and pre-positioned PPE at various international Airports. For the case of OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg), the scanners are not yet operational due to the renovation of the airport but a temporary installation is currently being organized. Epidemic Preparedness and Response (EPR) guidelines are in the process of printing; Outbreak Response Teams at National, Provincial and District levels are functioning, Teleconference is held on weekly basis with provincial CDC coordinators. A press release was sent out and a press conference was held. Guidelines were shared with Provinces.

The National Outbreak Response Teams and Provincial Outbreak Response Teams are closely monitoring the situation and developed a response plan to operationalize the pandemic preparedness plan. The National multi-stakeholder Committee on Influenza Pandemic meets every week (on Mondays) to take stock on actions taken and constraints in the implementation of the response plan. WHO, UNICEF and OCHA are members of the task Force.

## Swaziland

**UN Preparedness** - The UNCT has a draft Contingency Plan in place. A National Epidemic Task Force has been established and has met weekly since 28 April 2009, to assess the situation. Priority activities include prepositioning additional stocks of Tamiflu and protective equipment.

**Support to Government** – WHO has provided 1,000 doses of Tamiflu as well as protective equipment and specimen transport to the Government. The UNCT and OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) provided information and guidelines to the Ministry of Health (MoH) as well as all health facilities, including private practitioners of the case definition of the H1N1 virus. The Government has requested support in health worker training and developing health mobilization campaign. To improve diagnosis and testing capacity, the UNCT and MoH approached South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

## Zambia

**Current Situation** - The country has one suspected case of the H1N1 virus in Ndola, Copperbelt.

**UN Preparedness** – The Zambia United Nations Disaster Management Team (DMT) is revising and updating its Contingency Plan and Business Continuity Plans (BCPs). Information and guideline on the technical aspects, symptoms and preventative measures were circulated to all agencies.

**Support to Government** – The Government has instituted measures to improve surveillance at airport, maritime and road borders to detect, isolate and prevent the possible entry into the country of people who are affected by the disease.

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