

Funding approved for Avian Flu and the Workplace Project in Indonesia

NEW YORK—20 February The Management Committee of the UN Central Fund for Influenza Action (CFIA) recently met to review project proposals of member agencies. Donato Kiniger-Passigli of ILO/CRISIS attended the meeting to introduce the “Avian Flu and Workplace Project in Indonesia,” which was subsequently approved for the amount of 250,000 USD.

The CFIA, which was established to support critical activities that are not adequately funded, approved a similar pilot project of ILO in Thailand, which has been in operation since last November. The two projects are similar in that they are the first to respond to pandemic prevention and preparedness in the workplace by ensuring the participation of social partners. The only difference is that the new project in Indonesia will widen the scope of activities to include the informal economy.

In the case of Indonesia, the majority of Avian Flu victims were those that raised around ten to twelve fowl around their homes. The larger animal husbandries generally had advanced bio-security measures, and were less affected by Avian Flu. Accordingly, this project will place more emphasis on the informal sector and micro and small enterprises.

The target groups will be in both the formal and informal economies. In the former, special attention will be given to workers in healthcare centres that are not already being targeted by WHO, such as cleaning service, drivers, and kitchen and laundry staff. In addition, factory workers of industrial areas will be a focus group as it is common for them to engage in home-based fowl raising. This will be the project's entry point to the informal economy.

The informal economy will further be reached by mapping out the informal sector in selected regions. Eight years ago, ILO Jakarta conducted a project entitled “Workers Education Assistance in Strengthening Trade Union Support for Workers in the Informal Sector in Selected ASEAN Countries,” where informal workers were successfully identified. Although the data has changed since, the survey and data will serve as a model and basis for the new project.

Prior to project implementation, a project team will be formed and partner agencies will be consulted throughout the implementation of the project. The project team will define activities and project activities, finalise the work plan, and determine geographic scope.

The one-year project will be managed by Peter van Rooij and Sioe Lan Djoa of ILO Jakarta with the support of ILO/CRISIS. In addition, ILO Sub-regional will provide inputs through its occupational safety and health specialist. Once it has been successfully implemented, the project will then be replicated in other Avian Flu-stricken countries, such as Bangladesh, creating a model plan that can be applied in other regions to encourage preparedness in the advent of a pandemic.

Moreover, ILO/CRISIS, jointly with the Center for Disease Control, is also exploring the possibility of setting up a global programme for business continuity under pandemic circumstances, which will capitalize on the experiences of these two projects in Thailand and Indonesia.