

ILO consults tripartite partners on practical actions for Avian Flu prevention and preparedness

BANGKOK—5 March The ILO presented to tripartite constituents its workplan and steps already taken to promote Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) prevention in the workplace. The meeting received valuable inputs from stakeholders on how best to practically implement trainings to workers.

The Consultation Workshop on Effective Implementation of AHI and the Workplace Project was a one-day event, which took place at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok. The meeting successfully gathered the attendance of tripartite partners (Thai Ministries of Labour, Public Health, Agriculture and Cooperatives, and workers' and employers' organizations), as well as NGOs, researchers, health practitioners, and UN agencies. The participants are qualified practitioners in controlling AHI and responsible for designing, implementing and strengthening AHI action programme at national, regional and/or international levels.

The ultimate aim of the meeting was to open a dialogue amongst experienced stakeholders on practical actions to be taken at the workplace level to promote AHI prevention. The discussions were facilitated by first reviewing the current AHI situation in Thailand and assessing the actions of various stakeholders at managing AHI.

During the first session, trade union experiences in AHI prevention were shared. The International Union of Food Workers (IUF) pointed out that trainings and a secure working environment were indispensable to reduce AHI risks. These two elements essentially require upgrading basic occupation and safety health principles to include AHI concerns.

Participants advised the ILO to disseminate practical information and measures to prevent AHI in many workplaces through its tripartite channels. One possible avenue would be through the already established "National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza & Preparedness for Influenza Pandemic." Employers and workers in the poultry industry should be well trained as well to develop their own preparedness plans against AHI.

In fact, one element of the ongoing project is to provide action-oriented training at the grass-roots level to workers. Best practices of farmers have already been examined in neighbouring regions, which are being used to make a new chapter in the Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development (WIND) manuals. The subsequent steps are to train and retrain WIND trainers, who will then organize and hold training sessions of their own. The resulting multiplier effect will spread AHI prevention practices to more farmers and workers.

The consultation workshop witnessed fruitful exchanges of all participants, sharing practical project implementation ideas and establishing a useful network for project implementation. The next step is to develop an ILO training programme on AHI and test it together with the partner agencies who participated in the workshop.



Participants and panel at consultation workshop.