



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Avian Influenza**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 19, 2006

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the recent reports of new human deaths from avian influenza in the OSCE region underscore the importance of international cooperation to fight this disease. Human cases of avian flu so far remain limited and there is still no evidence of human-to-human transmission. However, the possibility that the virus could spread among humans remains a deep concern.

Countries across the world are making progress in reporting cases and planning for potential outbreaks. Since President Bush announced the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza to the United Nations in September of 2005, 120 countries have completed or initiated national preparedness plans – a number that has doubled since the U.S. launched this multilateral initiative.

True preparedness means committing funds as well as planning and testing. To protect against the spread of this disease, the United States is committing \$3.8 billion this year alone. At the international pledging conference in Beijing earlier this week, the U.S. announced that it is providing \$334 million towards the global campaign against avian influenza. The total pledges by all sources reached \$1.9 billion, with the U.S. pledge being the largest commitment by any single country.

Mr. Chairman, protecting our citizens at home also requires fighting avian influenza at its source, regardless of national boundaries. Thus, our government is ready to help foreign partners train personnel, expand surveillance, develop preparedness plans, and detect and contain influenza outbreaks. There may be a role for the OSCE and its field missions in this process. We would encourage the Secretariat to work in close coordination with the World Health Organization and other international organizations to help identify needs in the OSCE region, and instruct the organization's missions in the field to prepare to step in to help if needed.

The threat of avian influenza is at once global and local. It must be faced on both those fronts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.