

**SPEECH OF THE FAO REPRESENTATIVE AT THE OPENING OF THE INCEPTION
WORKSHOP FOR THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN FOR AVIAN
INFLUENZA UNDER OSRO/UGA/711/USA PROJECT 27TH – 28TH MARCH 2008 AT
TRIANGLE HOTEL JINJA**

Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries;

The WHO Country Representative

The Mission Director USAID

The FAO staff

The Commissioner Livestock health and Entomology

The Workshop Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me a lot of pleasure to officiate at yet another function of opening of the inception workshop for the OSRO/UGA/711/USA Project; “Support to the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Preparedness and Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Uganda”

Since the outbreaks of Avian Influenza in the Far East in the year 2003 and later to Asia, China, The Balkan States in 2004 to 2005, the FAO and WHO took the lead of alerting the World about a possible Pandemic of Avian Influenza in the human population.

The Current outbreaks of Avian Influenza worldwide have claimed 138 lives and infected 236 human cases (confirmed) as of 9th August 2006. Over 350 million poultry have either died or been killed due to avian influenza and its associated control programmes. From January 2006, a total of 52 countries worldwide have been infected, 8 of them are located in Africa. The infected African Countries include; Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d' Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan. AI is definitely a socioeconomic disease that disrupts the livelihoods and food security of the rural poor.

MAAIF and FAO formulated a project funded by USAID, to address the immediate activities of the National Preparedness Plan for Avian Influenza.

The Project worth USD 417,850 will specifically address surveillance and communication issues and strengthen national capabilities for early detection of HPAI. This project is a continuation of

the just ended project OSRO/UGA/604/USA; “the emergency assistance for the implementation of the surveillance and communication components of the National Plan of Action for Preparedness and Response to Avian Influenza in Uganda”.

FAO has taken keen interest in the affairs of avian influenza in this country and is a member of the national task force of avian influenza and is coordinating the donor community, especially the PMA donor group, to mobilize resources for avian influenza preparedness and response plan. At the same time FAO has contributed technical assistance for the preparation of the contingency plan, AI control strategy and preparedness and response plan.

In order to strengthen the capacity for diagnosis and surveillance for avian influenza the FAO, along with other donors and organisations, has procured some protective gear, reagents and equipment for Uganda.

Honourable Minister, the main objectives of this Inception workshop is to bring stakeholders who will implement this project together, define and agree on:

- (i) The Project content,
- (ii) The work plan,
- (iii) Implementation time table and
- (iv) Procurement schedules

It is, therefore, my sincere hope that the next two days will be utilized fruitfully to achieve the above objectives.

I wish you all participants fruitful deliberations and look forward to a team ready to face and eradicate HPAI should it arrive in this country.