

AUC NEWS



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AU, ECA, ADB IN JOINT SECRETARIAT TO CHAMPION AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION

It was an auspicious occasion indeed when three of Africa's top executives met on Friday 24 February, to put together the beginnings of a most significant partnership, i.e. that between the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The three leaders were Dr Donald Kaberuka for ADB, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh for ECA and Professor Alpha Oumar Konare for AUC. They met at the AUC headquarters in Addis Ababa.

Their three institutions have clear cut roles: AU has the political mandate, ADB has the financial mandate and the ECA is responsible for economic issues.

The aim of the grand occasion was to re-launch the Joint AU/ECA/ADB Secretariat, first formed 16 years ago but which had

Kaberuka, while Mr. Janneh said, "At ECA, we want to put our knowledge, enthusiasm and capacity to assist in realizing this vision".



From left to right: Dr Kaberuka, President of ADB; Professor Konare, Chairperson AU Commission; Mr. Janneh, Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. Mazimhaka, Deputy Chairperson AU Commission at a briefing on the proposed secretariat

The leaders brainstormed on ways and means to achieve the vision. Policy advocacy and consensus building through special initiatives was an issue tackled by Dr Kaberuka. He said there are a number of initiatives being carried out independently by

each of the three institutions, Why, he asked, can these not be rationalized by coming together to see how best to advocate for common policy positions.

since become inactive. The three institutions felt there was a need to operationalise their commitment to Africa's vision. Professor Konare outlined the ultimate vision as a United States of Africa. This shared vision refers to an Africa integrated, prosperous and peaceful, an Africa driven by its own citizens, a dynamic force in the global arena. From the outset, Dr Kaberuka and Mr Janneh emphasized their desire to cooperate with the African Union in championing Africa's development: "I want to work with you to make sure we deliver," said Dr.

This discussion was very closely related to the one which followed, led by Mr. Janneh, focusing on rationalization of inter governmental meetings and major events. How to avoid duplication of activities and efforts became a major discussion point. The three leaders agreed on

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the need to complement each other. There is no need, they said, for each of the institutions to be pursuing objectives which are already being well done by another. In the hosting of ministerial meetings e.g. it was suggested that instead of each one hosting a meeting with ministers responsible for a specific sector, that they instead coordinate in areas requiring their collective action so that they host the meetings jointly and thereby save on the human, financial and material resources, while being equally effective. Lack of coordination, said Dr Kaberuka, “can be taken by the international community as an excuse for doing nothing.” There are so many challenges in Africa, the leaders said, that the continent cannot afford duplication. When effected, this measure will come as good news to African governments and development partners, as it will ensure that available funds go much further in achieving more objectives rather than on duplication of the same activities.

Dr Kaberuka next tackled the issue of coordination, joint programming and implementation of activities in selected priority areas. It was already clear that the leaders agreed on the need to avoid duplication. However there was need to identify what issues are priority issues. Dr Kaberuka identified three major areas, namely; infrastructure, assisting countries emerging from conflict and handling

emergencies in Africa. He asked for example whether Africa has the capacity to assist those countries affected by bird flu and whether there is an early warning system. Mr. Janneh put forward lack of accurate statistical data as a major hindrance to be overcome. “How can Africa plan”, he inquired, “when we do not have reliable statistics to tell us where are?” Statistics play a critical role in the process of policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. He also recognized trade as a priority area.

Another priority area lay in the field of policy making. Africa needs to know what has been the impact of previous policies and initiatives aimed at development and therefore be able to chart the way forward. In this same vein, Dr Kaberuka had earlier said that the biggest challenge facing Africa was “our capacity to design and deliver policies, and to work together to deliver those policies”. Professor Konare identified an additional four priority areas, i.e. agricultural production to avert starvation, water management, capacity building in human resources, and bridging the digital divide by engaging more use of Information Communication Technologies. He also professed a desire to see more concrete projects on the ground such as bridges.

There was also consensus that Africa should strike while the iron is still hot. 2005, the leaders said, was Africa’s year. A lot of international attention was focused on Africa. The continent cannot afford to lose this momentum, especially in terms of discussing Official Development Assistance (ODA), trade, aid e.t.c.

The three leaders were also of the

same mind when it came to defining the preconditions necessary to achieve the African vision. Some of the basic requirements they said, were good governance, stability, peace and security, increasing space for economic growth, transparency, fight against corruption, respect for the rule of law, and tolerance. Africa’s human and material resources and its heritage have to be mobilized to be at the continent’s service in this drive to achieve the ultimate vision. In all of these efforts it is also necessary to work with the private sector and civil society, get the confidence of the people of Africa and those in the diaspora, and ensure gender equity, said Professor Konare.

To get the people’s confidence necessarily implies that the people are aware of what one is trying to do and that they feel they own the process. The leaders agreed that Africa and the rest of the world need to be informed of this initiative. Communication was therefore singled out as a crucial factor.

This meeting clearly represented a meeting of minds and a burning desire to realize Africa’s vision. Here were three leaders, each of whom could easily remain in his own little corner and do his own things regardless of what others were doing; three Africans with a shared deep faith in Africa; and who understand the immense contribution that each of their organizations can make to the continent’s development, but more so, the multiplied effect of working together. Granted, this was only a beginning; technical, logistical and other details need to be worked out and agreed on, but that this meeting happened, and at such a high level, can only be a cause for celebration and hope that Africa is making concrete steps to being a United States of Africa.



“LET US WORK COLLECTIVELY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE AFRICAN UNION”

CHAIRPERSON TELLS NEW YEAR GATHERING

STAFF UNION REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTS REPORT

The Chairperson of the AU Commission says the AU will grow stronger, and that everyone needs to work together .

H.E Konare said this as he hosted a New Year reception for members of staff of the Commission on Monday 6 February, during which management and staff mingled, chatted and helped themselves to sumptuous snacks and drinks which were freely available. It was a very festive occasion, but one which was also crucial is so far as it provided a forum for the Chairperson to speak directly to all employees of the AUC based in Addis Ababa. It was also an occasion for the staff association to present a detailed report of its activities while highlighting its major concerns.

Mr. Konare observed that 2005 was not an easy year. However, the Commission went through it successfully and he was convinced that it would grow bigger and stronger in future.

He said the African Union needs to take care of its people, adding that the Institutional Transformation Project will assist in this respect. He encouraged people to work collectively so as to have long lasting results and congratulated every one for their contribution to the Khartoum Summit. He also welcomed all those who joined the Commission this year.

Chairperson Konare reminded the gathering that they are at the Commission in the service of others, of

the humblest people of the continent. He then wished everyone success and a happy New Year, before the representative of the AU Staff Association took the podium.



The Chairperson, the Deputy and Commissioners listen to Mr. Garoma's speech



Mr. Garoma addressing the New Year gathering

Mr. Garoma Daba began by requesting a minute's silence in memory of two members of staff who passed away in 2005. He then recounted some of the successes registered by Africa in 2005, which included peace in Southern Sudan and the ascension to office of Africa's first woman president in Liberia.

The staff association representative said, despite the fact that the association did not hold a general assembly meeting in 2005; it had been involved

in settling some issues relating to staff benefits. These included salary increments for short term staff, educational allowances for locally recruited staff, and purchase of gymnasium equipment.

Mr. Garoma appealed to management to seriously speed up the process of finalizing and approving staff regulations and rules. He encouraged the Commission to consider incumbent short term

staff before looking externally for candidates to fill vacant posts. He also said the involvement of the staff association in recruitment was not up to its expectation. Therefore on behalf of the bureau of the association he brought the following issues for "urgent" attention of the Commission:

tion of the Commission:

- The staff association should participate fully in the evaluation and final selection of candidates
- The management should evaluate all internal candidates' interviews first and give priority to those staff qualified enough to fill available vacancies.

He assured the Chairperson and the management that the staff of the AUC is fully committed to achieving the vision and mission of the AU.

SOMALIA SIGNS ALL AU TREATIES AND CONVENTIONS

Foreign minister elaborates on the prevailing situation in Somalia



H.E. Abdulahi Ismail puts his signature to the AU documents. Next to him is Ambassador Farah.

On Thursday 23 February, Somalia's Foreign Affairs Minister H.E. Abdulahi Sheikh Ismail signed 17 treaties of the African Union, making his country only one of four countries that have signed all the 31 treaties and conventions of the AU. Mr. Ismail was accompanied to the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa by his country's Ambassador to Ethiopia, H.E. Abdikariu Farah.

Mr. Ismail explained that signing the treaties was one way of indicating that Somalia is coming back to the international family of nations. After being isolated from the international community by 14 years of war, his country is trying to keep up with the pace of diplomatic, economic and political development on the continent. Somalia, he said, accepts the treaties since they were discussed at length and agreed to by heads of state and government of member states. He said, by signing the treaties, his government is fulfilling its obligations to the African Union, since it was a founding member of the Organisation of African Unity. Somalia was also showing that it is coming back to life and wants to play its full and rightful role in the AU and the in-

ternational community.

AUC took the opportunity to ask the minister a number of questions pertaining to his country's development.

Somalia is a country coming out of conflict. What processes do you have in place for post conflict reconstruction and development?

A After the formation of the government, we are in what we call a post reconciliation period which requires three elements. First and foremost we need institutional consolidation: secondly we require the complete normalization of the security situation in the country and a deepening of the process of reconciliation at grassroots level. The third element is the reconstruction of Somalia and that requires huge effort on our side, on the part of Africa as well as the international community. All the infrastructure was destroyed by the war, therefore the reconstruction requires a huge amount of capital injection.

However, the institutional consolidation is already underway. The parliament is going to meet very soon in Baidoa* and demobilization of the militia is underway.

One of the problems, that has been widely reported is that of pirates operating off the coast of Somalia. How are you dealing with this issue?

A That is a very dramatic situation. It is an extension of the inland insecurity to the seaside. As much as Somalia's internal situation will require a complete stabilization programme, so will the case also of the territorial waters of Somalia. We don't have all the means as yet to protect our seas shores. We are ask-

ing the African Union and the international community to come to our aid in establishing the security forces. We are asking them to deploy peace keeping and stabilisation forces inside Somalia. This matter not only represents an internal threat to the society of Somalia, but it goes beyond the borders, affecting the international maritime navigation and jeopardizing goods and lives transiting from one continent to the other.

After the formation of the Transitional Federal government in Nairobi the Somali government moved back home, but it did not go to Mogadishu, the capital. Is it now in Mogadishu?

A No. We have avoided going there because we want a conducive political and security climate in the capital. We cannot put our institutions at risk. They are working hard for this destroyed country. Therefore priority number one is the protection of the institutions. That is the reason why we have chosen to locate ourselves in Jowhar, 90 kilometers north of Mogadishu and in Baidoa, 250 kilometers west of Mogadishu. The concern is Somalia, The concern is the protection of these newly hard won and built institutions, with the help of Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), AU and the international community.

*** The Somali Parliament met on 26 February in Baidoa, Reuters news agency reported that 205 out of 275 deputies attended the meeting and about 15 delegates from the AU, the United Nations, the Arab League, Italy and Sweden also attended.**

AFRICA INCHES CLOSER TO USING ICT FOR SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The first steering committee meeting on the project to create the “Pan-African e-Network” was held at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30 to 31 January 2006.



In his opening statement, Dr. Bernard ZOBA, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the African Union Commission reminded the participants of the objective of the African Union to use Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) not only as an integrating tool for the Continent, but more to promote socio-economic development of the continent.

He informed the meeting that since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Government, the AU has undertaken several initiatives which included sending out an invitation to host the Hub Earth Station with the deadline fixed for 15 March, 2006. Some delegations however, emphasized the need for clarity in the criteria for selection of the hub station and the nodal centers. India urged that the site of the hub station be identified urgently so as to facilitate progress.

The head of the Indian delegation, the Ambassador of India to Ethiopia, His Excellency Mr. Gurjit Singh in-



From top: Commissioner Zoba and Director Baba Moussa of Infrastructure and Energy Department; Ambassador of India to Ethiopia, H.E Mr. Gurjit Singh (in turban) talking to a team member: Some conference delegates

dedicated that the Indian Government was pleased to assist the African continent in the area of information and communications technologies, which he said, has done a lot of good for the Indian population by making quality services reach the previously un-reached.

The representative of the Commission of the African Union, Dr. Zouli Bonkoungou gave highlights of activities undertaken by the African Union with respect to implementation of the project. He said the AU has put in place; a Special Advisory Committee, a Steering Committee and a number of Technical Sub-Committees to facilitate implementation of the project.

The representative of the World Health Organization emphasized the need to synchronize the project with similar ones in order to optimize the use of scarce resources available on the African continent and also to implement them in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Mr. Singh expressed concern at the pace at which the project was being implemented, and wished the implementation process to be accelerated by the African Union to ensure timely completion. The African Union in response indicated the need to follow due process among its members. The meeting, however, agreed that the time-scale fixed for the selection of the site to host the Hub Earth Station be respected.

It was agreed to have a two-tier approach in order to speed up the implementation process i.e. bilateral and continental. Under the bilateral approach, each of the 53 Member-States shall specify its

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AFRICA INCHES CLOSER TO USING ICT FOR SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (cont....)

centers of interest for Tele-education, Tele-medicine and VVIP connectivity. Already, three countries i.e. Ethiopia, Ghana and the Seychelles have signed bilateral agreements with Telecommunications Consultants India (TCIL) who will implement the project. At the African Union level, there will be concerted action to avoid the stop/start syndrome which could delay the project. The meeting also agreed to evaluate existing experiences in Africa on Tele-education and Tele-medicine in order to optimize the use of scarce resources.

The Representative of The African Development Bank emphasized the importance of sustainability of the project after 5 years of the Indian Government support by ensuring its

viability from the initial stage of the project. Regarding this, the Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr. Singh referred to an initiative undertaken by the Indian government in Ghana a few years back which is still viable today and was positive that this would be the same with this project. After some deliberation, members agreed on the importance of having African staff attached to the Indian team running the project so as to to enhance capacity-building and sustainability. An Ad hoc team will be constituted to draw a Business Plan on the maintenance and operation of the Hub Earth Station in view of its sustainability and viability on a non – profit making basis.

Highlights of the Indo- African co-operation are

- 52 African countries are to be connected through satellite and fibre optic links.
- The network will provide tele education, tele medicine, Internet, e-governance, video conferencing and VOIP services
- HUB- will be linked to internet backbone through a service provider.

The network will connect

- 5 universities to 53 learning centers
- 10 super specialty hospitals to 53 remote hospitals in rural areas

As some conflicts are resolved...

POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT ASSUMES GREATER IMPORTANCE

The Department of Peace and Security (PSC) recently held a two day meeting of experts on Post Conflict reconstruction and Development (PCRD) at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa as part of efforts to elaborate an AU Policy Framework on PCRD, prior to its submission to Heads of State and Government.

The meeting focused on

- Elaboration of the benchmarks, standards and indicators to evaluate progress in each of the constitutive elements of the PCRD, namely: humanitarian issues; governance in transition; disarmament; demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation; security sector reform; jus-

tice; human rights and reconciliation; socio economic recovery; and gender in transition and recovery.

- The institutional set up and mechanisms required to implement PCRD
- The sequencing of PCRD activities

In its meeting documents, the PSC said Post Conflict Reconstruction

and Development is increasingly important in Africa, given the containment of a number of conflicts on the continent, e.g. Burundi, Central Africa Republic, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, the Sudan and Somalia.

The meeting on PCRD was held as a follow up to the decision of the AU Executive Council meeting in Sirte in July 2005, which mandated the development of an AU policy on post conflict reconstruction. These efforts are also in line with the provisions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union which states the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent, as one of the objectives of the Union.

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AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION HONOURS OLMEE SERVICE PERSONNEL



Ambassador Said Djinnit: Commissioner of Peace and Security Department decorating one of the officers

Members of the OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (OLMEE) were, on Wednesday 15 January, presented with the OLMEE Peace Medal by African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Said Djinnit at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The awards were in recognition of the men having met the requirements of eligibility and having completed the necessary period of qualifying service. The ceremony also recognized 10 officers who could not make it to Addis Ababa and presented them their awards in absentia.

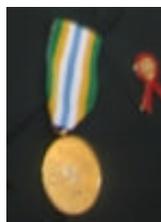
One major was awarded the Peace Medal post humously.

Speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and on behalf of the leadership of the AU at the ceremony, Peace and Security Department Commissioner, Ambassador Said Djinnit expressed the AU's heartfelt appreciation for their contribution to the achievement of peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea in the first instance, to peace efforts in the wider Horn of Africa region and to peace in Africa as a whole.

The Commissioner thanked all mem-

ber states who have contributed to OLMEE and expressed his condolences to countries that have lost military personnel while working for the cause of peace in Africa. He also thanked the AU partners who have helped the AU in its peace efforts and assured them of the organisation's continued commitment to peace.

The OLMEE medal consists of the AU colours of green, gold and White and AU Logo and the blue colour of the UN logo which is enclosed by the colours of the AU.



According to the master of ceremony at the occasion, Mr. Bereng Mtimkulu, green symbolizes hope, gold symbolizes the rich natural resources of Africa, and white symbolizes peace. The inclusion of the colours of the AU flag in the OLMEE medal symbolize the commitment of the AU to the Ethiopia - Eritrea peace process and the hope that the two countries can develop their human, economic and natural resources in peace.

GHANA RATIFIES CONVENTION OF THE AFRICAN ENERGY COMMISSION

Ghana's ambassador to Ethiopia and to the African Union, His Excellency John E Aggrey deposited the instrument of ratification of the Convention of the African Energy Commission with the AU Commission, at a brief ceremony held at the AUC headquarters in Addis Ababa on 28 February 2006.

This is the 16th ratification by Ghana of the AU's 31 treaties and conventions.

Deputy legal counsel for the AUC, Djeneba Diarra congratulated Ghana for signing the convention and appealed, through the ambassador, for it to sign the remaining treaties and conventions.

Ambassador Aggrey said his country tries to live by all the treaties and conventions it signs, effect them and achieve the purpose for which they were drawn up.

The convention of the African Energy Commission was adopted by the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Lusaka in 2001, as a result of the need to deal with shortages of energy in many African countries in spite of their vast energy potential. It aims to promote cooperation, research and development, integration and harmonization of programmes as well as mobilization of resources or joint projects.

PARTNERSHIP

AFRICAN UNION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA IN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

On 17 February 2006, The Chairperson of the Commission Professor Alpha Ouma Konare and the Co Chairperson of the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), Dr Frene Ginwala signed a Memorandum of understanding which the Chairperson said is expected to result in concrete cooperation between the two organizations.

Upon signing the important document, both parties agreed that it needs to be a live document, i.e. one whose provisions are implemented for the benefit of the African people



rather than one which gathers dust on the shelf.

The areas of cooperation outlined in the document are:

- Promoting sustainable peace, especially for countries in transition

- Regional integration, including trade
- Management of natural resources
- Governance and anti corruption

According to the World Bank web site, the purpose of the GCA is to bring together African policy makers and their partners to deepen dialogue and build consensus on Africa's priority development issues. The GCA's agenda is focused on the broad themes of a) peace and security; b) governance and transition to democracy; and c) sustainable growth and integration into the global economy.

African Union Commission/ UNFPA partnership results in enhanced ICT Capacity for the Commission

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through its Liaison Office in Addis Ababa has handed over Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment worth US\$110 000 to the African Union as part of its contribution towards the institutional and technical capacity building of the AU.

Ms. Etta Tadesse of the UNFPA Liaison office presented the equipment at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Ms. Tadesse said the donation was part of a Project Cooperation Agreement in the amount of US\$1.2 million, which is based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed on

June 3, 2005 between the African Union Commission and UNFPA.

In her address at the ceremony, Commissioner Gawanas said the equipment will make it easier for the Commission to process and retrieve data and make it available to the relevant stakeholders in a timely manner. Dr. Botlhale Tema represented Professor Najia Essayed, Commissioner of HRST.

The ICT package included one data center server, one application/ storage server, three desktop computers, two laptop computers, one laser



Commissioner Gawanas receiving some of the equipment from Ms. Tadesse



The server which was part of the donation

jet printer, one color laser jet printer, peripherals and related software.

FOCUS ON BIRD FLU

AFRICA PREPARES TO TACKLE THE NEW GLOBAL CHALLENGE

In view of the eminent threat to the continent by the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPA1), the seventh AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for African Animal Resources held in Kigali in November 2005 under the auspices of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, discussed this issue and endorsed a number of resolutions on the prevention and control of avian influenza.



Commissioner Rosebud Kurwijila
Rural Economy and Agriculture

The conference, among other recommendations, urged African countries to strengthen their surveillance of animal diseases and requested donors to urgently mobilize the necessary resources to support the current efforts being undertaken by African countries.

The issue of bird flu has been in the world headlines, with fears that a world wide outbreak will claim thousands if not millions of human lives, in addition to the millions of birds that will either die of the disease or by culling as governments try to con-

tain the disease.

It is expected that, in Africa the disease will be most devastating to the poor people living in the rural areas, where poultry is one of the biggest sources of income. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), a relatively conservative 2 million to 7.4 million deaths would be recorded while poultry losses from deaths or culling are estimated to be around \$500 million. Currently, 80 people have died from the disease.

Africa faces a greater threat from bird flu for a number of reasons, including

- It is the next destination for migratory birds
- It is the least prepared continent to address the control of HPA1
- Its marketing systems bring close contact between human beings and birds

Since that conference, the AUC through its technical office of IBAR has developed a comprehensive plan of action on emergency preparedness for the prevention and eventual control of the disease on the continent.

Given the grave threat to Africa, it is necessary for people to understand what bird flu is, how it is spread, what are the symptoms, what precautions one can take and what treatment is available should one become infected.

The following is the first of two parts of an abridged version of a longer article prepared by medical specialists in the AUC medical center.

FACTS ABOUT BIRD FLU

What is avian influenza (bird flu)?

Bird flu is an infectious disease caused by avian (from bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. However, bird flu is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

Do bird flu viruses infect humans?

Bird flu viruses do not usually infect humans, but several cases of human infection with have occurred since 1997. Humans are usually infected by influenza type B viruses, which do not cause pandemics.

There is a possible risk to people who have contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated with excretions from infected birds.

What is an avian influenza A (H5N1) virus?

Influenza A (H5N1) virus – also called “H5N1 virus” – is an influenza A virus subtype that occurs mainly in birds. Like all bird flu viruses, H5N1 virus circulates among birds worldwide, is very contagious among birds, and can be deadly.

Human Influenza Viruses versus Avian Influenza Viruses

Humans can also be infected with influenza types A, B, and C. However, the only subtypes of influenza A virus that normally infect people are influenza A subtypes H1N1, H1N2, and H3N2. Wild birds are the natural host for all subtypes of influenza A virus. Typically wild birds do not get sick when they are infected with influenza virus. However, domestic poultry, such as turkeys and chickens, can get very sick and die from avian influenza, and some avian viruses also can cause serious disease and death in wild birds.

How does bird flu spread?

Infected birds shed flu virus in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. Susceptible birds become infected when they have contact with contaminated excretions or with surfaces that are contaminated with excretions. It is believed that most cases of bird flu infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces. The spread of avian influenza viruses from one ill person to another has been reported very rarely, and transmission has not been observed to continue beyond one person.

What is the risk to humans from bird flu?

The risk from bird flu is generally low to most people because the viruses occur mainly among birds and do not usually infect humans. However, during an outbreak of bird flu among poultry (domesticated chicken, ducks, turkeys), there is a possible risk to people who have contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated with excretions from infected birds. The current

outbreak of avian influenza A (H5N1) among poultry in Asia and Europe is an example of a bird flu outbreak that has caused human infections and deaths. In such situations, people should avoid contact with infected birds or contaminated surfaces, and should be careful when handling and cooking poultry.



Chickens and other domestic fowl can get very sick and die from bird flu.

What is the risk to humans from the H5N1 virus in Asia and Europe?

The H5N1 virus does not usually infect humans. In 1997 however, the first case of spread from a bird to a human was seen during an outbreak of bird flu in poultry in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The virus caused severe respiratory illness in 18 people, 6 of whom died. Since that time, there have been other cases of H5N1 infection among humans. Recent human cases of H5N1 infection that have occurred in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam have coincided with large H5N1 outbreaks in poultry.

So far, the spread of H5N1 virus from person to person has been rare and has not continued beyond one person. However, because all influenza viruses have the ability to change, scientists are concerned that the H5N1 virus one day could be able to spread easily from one person to another. Because these

viruses do not commonly infect humans, there is little or no immune protection against them in the human population. If the H5N1 virus were able to infect people and spread easily from person to person, an influenza pandemic (worldwide outbreak of disease) could begin. No one can predict when a pandemic might occur. However, experts from around the world are watching the H5N1 situation very closely and are preparing for the possibility that the virus may begin to spread more easily and widely from person to person.

What are the symptoms of bird flu in humans?

Symptoms of bird flu in humans have ranged from typical flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress), and other severe and life-threatening complications. The symptoms of bird flu may depend on which virus caused the infection.

This article was prepared by Professor Koki Ndombo MD, Dr MS Kaloko MD, Dr MS Diallo DPharm, Dr Nahase Buche MD and Dr Abdou Khelil, D. on behalf of the AU Medical Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Note: Since this article was prepared, bird flu among domestic fowl has been reported in two African countries, bringing the worldwide total of infected countries to 18- **Editor**

Next month - How is bird flu infection treated?

NEWS BRIEFS

AU HOSTS THE AFRICAN DIPLOMATS WIVES BAZAAR

On Saturday 25 February, the African Union Commission played host to a well attended bazaar, organized by the African diplomats wives. There were many items on sale, food was widely available and a playground for children offered many games. These are a few pictures from the day:



RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT COURSE HELD TO IMPROVE SYSTEMS AT AUC

The Directorate for Strategic Planning Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Resource Mobilization (SPPMERM), in collaboration with the Canadian partners organized a “Results Based Management” workshop to strengthen the skills of the AU staff related to Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Systems. The workshop was held at the AUC headquarters in Addis Ababa, from 20-21 February 2006.

The Workshop was the first step in the 2nd phase of AUC Institutional Project.

The main Objectives of the Workshop were to:

- Better understand the Results-Based Planning and Management process.
- Strengthen the skills of the AUC staff in Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Programmes/ Projects.
- Support the Mid-Term Monitoring and Evaluation Report for AUC Programme Budget.

30 staff of the Commission participated in the workshop - 5 from AU Regional Offices and 25 from various departments.

As a follow-up, the workshop identified on the job training and coaching support in the preparation of the 2007 AU Programme Budget, as well as monitoring and evaluation and reporting.

AUC MOURNS THE PASSING AWAY OF DIRECTOR ENNET NKAMBULE

This month, the AU Commission learnt with deep sorrow and regret of the passing away, in South Africa, of the Director of Administration and Human Resource Development, Ms Ennet Nomathamsanqa Nkambule. Ms Nkambule died on 16 February. She was 51.



The late Ms Ennet Nkambule

A gathering in memory of the late director was held in the plenary hall of the AUC on Wednesday 22 February. Present were members of AUC management and staff, Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps.



AU staff and management listen to the Deputy Chairperson giving his eulogy

BITS AND PIECES

An English teacher was flicking around the TV dial looking for something suitable for his son to watch. He found a rodeo and he and his son began to watch it. "Wow, look at them bowlegged cowboys!" exclaimed the son at one point.

The professor was horrified with this improper use of language and he vowed there and then to begin schooling his son in English each evening, with a particular emphasis on the works of Shakespeare. Two years later he was again flicking the TV dial when he came upon another rodeo. After watching for a few minutes his son said, "What manner of men are these who wear their pants in parentheses?"

If you give a man a fish, he will eat once

If you teach a man to fish, he will eat for the rest of his life

If you are thinking a year ahead, sow seed

If you are thinking ten years ahead, educate the people

By sowing seed you will harvest once

By planting a tree you will harvest ten fold

By educating the people you will harvest one hundred fold

What the world needs are more people who will apply to their jobs the same enthusiasm for getting ahead as they display in traffic.

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

All AUC Management and staff are encouraged to contribute articles for publication, either on work related matters or as an outlet for their artistic talent. You can also send in your comments on articles published in the newsletter.

Contributions from AU missions and bureaus outside Addis Ababa are particularly welcome.

Individual contributions and letters submitted must have the author's name and department. They will be acknowledged and credited. They may also be edited before publication.

Keep your contributions coming to the editor at the contact details outlined below.

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