

UN needs \$20 million to battle bird flu in West Africa

July 20 2015

The UN appealed on Monday for \$20 million to stem outbreaks of bird flu in West Africa, a region still weakened by the Ebola crisis.

The Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organisation(FAO) said it needed the funds (18.45 million euros) to respond swiftly to outbreaks of H5N1 avian flu, without which the poultry virus would spread beyond the region.

Because the highly virulent disease can be transmitted to humans, the FAO said it was working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) on contingency plans and probing suspected [flu cases](#).

The call follows outbreaks in poultry farms, markets and family holdings in Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria and Ghana.

"The outbreak comes as countries across West Africa are still recovering from, and in some cases still battling, Ebola," the FAO said, referring an epidemic that was centered in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

"Avian flu could trigger a mass die-off of chicken—a nutritious and inexpensive source of food for many people—with detrimental impacts on diets and on the economy of the region, exacerbating an already difficult situation," it added.

Juan Lubroth, head of FAO's animal health division, warned of "a real risk of further virus spread."

More must be done to "strengthen veterinary investigation and reporting systems in the region and tackle the disease at the root, before there is a spillover to humans," said Lubroth.

The \$20 million will go towards bolstering weak veterinary systems, upgrading laboratories and putting FAO specialists on the ground in affected and at-risk countries.

Responses include destruction of infected and exposed poultry, disinfection of premises and markets and the safe disposal of dead birds.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: UN needs \$20 million to battle bird flu in West Africa (2015, July 20) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-07-million-bird-flu-west-africa.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.