

NTS BULLETIN

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MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

Influenza A (H1N1) / Swine Flu

‘Asian pledges common fight against flu’, 8 May 2009, Reuters.

BANGKOK (Reuters) - Asian countries agreed on Friday to boost drug stockpiles, share essential supplies and tighten surveillance against an H1N1 flu virus that posed an “imminent health threat” to the region.

Health ministers from the 10-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus China, Japan and South Korea also agreed to set up a “red alert” hotline and rapid response teams to fight the spread of the virus, also known as swine flu.

Despite the small number of confirmed cases in Asia compared to Mexico, the epicenter of the H1N1 outbreak, the United States and Europe, ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan warned against complacency.

“We cannot afford to let our guard down. A pandemic remains a formidable challenge to the region,” Surin told the meeting.

‘Swine flu could hit one in three’, 12 May 2009, BBC News.

A third of the world’s population could be infected with swine flu, expert projections suggest.

Researchers say swine flu has “full pandemic potential”, spreading readily between people and is likely to go global in the next six to nine months. Although one in three who come in contact will likely become infected, the Imperial College London team declined to estimate the death toll.

Additional Info:

[Click here to read the latest updates on the World Health Organisation \(WHO\) website.](#)

[Influenza A \(H1N1\): Frequently asked questions.](#)

[Global map of laboratory confirmed cases and deaths by WHO.](#)

[Key facts and information about influenza.](#)

[Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network.](#)

HEALTH AND HUMAN SECURITY

News & Commentaries

H1N1 outbreak update

- ‘Expert analysis: Mexican swine flu – the story so far’, 29 April 2009, *NewScientist.com*.

This article from the New Scientist analyses the characteristics of the virus, and compares it to previous strains that emerged in the 20th century.

- ‘Why travel bans won’t prevent a flu pandemic’, 29 April 2009, *NewScientist.com*.

Ewen Callaway argues that travel bans to control the spread of H1N1 may do more harm than good, and that the proper application of drug treatments is a better method for controlling the virus.

- ‘Asian wisdom on epidemics’, 29 April 2009, *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

This article by the Far Eastern Economic Review recounts responses to the 2003 outbreak of SARS, and suggests that lessons learned from that crisis could be applied to the present outbreak of H1N1.

- 'The path of pandemic', 2 May 2009, *Newsweek*.

Laurie Garrett talks about the path of a pandemic using Mexico and H1N1 as an example.

- 'Swine flu: Can science save us from the second wave?', 6 May 2009, *NewScientist.com*.

Is the world ready for a killer, autumn wave of swine flu? Infections may be winding down in Mexico and causing fewer deaths worldwide than feared, but what is now keeping health officials awake at night is the possibility that a more virulent version will come roaring back and kill millions.

Articles

- 'The financial crisis and global health', 19 January 2009, *World Health Organization*.

Global economic crisis and world health. The global economic downturn is likely to have ripple effects on health and social spending, especially in developing countries. Protecting investments in health and social structures is essential to maintain stability and security, and accelerate economic recovery. The challenge facing the world now is to prevent an economic crisis becoming a social and health crisis.

- 'Incubation periods of acute respiratory viral infections: A systematic review', May 2009, *The Lancet*.

Using data from as far back as the 1920s, researchers have calculated mean and median incubation periods for nine respiratory viral infections of public-health importance including influenza A and SARS, establishing the average time between infection and symptom onset. This study has policy implications in planning pandemic preparedness and response, including the quarantining of potentially infectious individuals who might be incubating a virus.

- 'Questions raised over response to influenza A outbreak', May 2009, *The Lancet*.

Anastasia Moloney examines whether local and international responses to the outbreak of H1N1 were quick enough.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'Climate change talks should include farmers', 2 April 2009, *FAO Newsroom*.
- Matthew C. Nisbet, 'Communicating climate change: Why frames matter for public engagement', March-April 2009, *Environment Magazine*.
- Michael Meacher, 'Responding to the triple crunch', 4 May 2009, *Guardian.co.uk*.
- Oliver Tickell, 'Obama's green promise', 4 May 2009, *Guardian.co.uk*.
- Scott Barrett, 'How to prevent climate change summit from failure', 1 May 2009, *YaleGlobal Online*.
- Suzzane Goldenberg, 'US environment correspondent Barack Obama's 100 days: Green measures', 29 April 2009, *Guardian.co.uk*.

Papers & Reports

- Anita Talberg, 'The Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism', Parliamentary of Australia Background Note, 23 April 2009.

Australian background note provides information on the Clean Development Mechanism and its associated emissions credits.

- 'Global Green New Deal Policy Brief', UNEP, March 2009.

A recent research papers commissioned by UNEP argues that an investment of one percent of global GDP over the next two years could provide the critical mass of green infrastructure needed to seed a significant greening of the global economy. The overall size of this recommended 'green' stimulus is well within the realm of the possible. It is at one percent of global GDP which constitutes only a fourth of the total size of proposed fiscal stimulus packages.

- James Meadowcroft & François Bregha, 'Governance for Sustainable Development: Meeting the Challenge Ahead', Government of Canada Policy Research Initiative Research Paper, March 2009.

This paper draws on theoretical literature and practical experience to explore the challenges that sustainable development poses for established governance practices.

- Julie Styles, 'Climate Change: The Case for Action', Parliamentary of Australia Research Paper no. 28, 21 April 2009.

This paper presents the case for Australia's climate change mitigation.

- 'Legal Form of a New Climate Agreement: Avenues and Options', Pew Center on Global Climate Change, April 2009.

This paper identifies the potential legal avenues for an outcome or outcomes under the Bali Action Plan and the Kyoto Protocol Article 3.9 process. This paper was released at a side event held during the international climate negotiations in Bonn, Germany in April 2009.

- Linda Jakobson, 'Climate Change: China's Changing Climate', the World Today, Vol 65/5, May 2009.

The Chinese government is pursuing a delicate balancing act ahead of the Copenhagen summit in December when the post-Kyoto climate change agreement is scheduled to be sealed. On the one hand, Chinese leaders are adamant that combating climate change must not deter economic development, while on the other, they want to bring to the post-2012 climate negotiations sufficient evidence to prove that China is indeed intent on curbing its greenhouse gas emissions.

- 'Measurement, Reporting, and Verification in a Post-2012 Climate Agreement', Pew Center on Global Climate Change, April 2009.

This report outlines options for measurement, reporting, and verification of countries' actions in a post-2012 global climate agreement. It is also released at a side event held during the international climate negotiations in Bonn, Germany in April 2009.

- 'Prioritizing Climate Change Risks and Actions on Adaptation', Government of Canada Policy Research Initiative, March 2009.

This discussion paper reviews selected tools and institutional approaches used in other jurisdictions to help prioritise climate change risks and adaptation options.

- 'Singapore Blueprint for Sustainable Development', Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development (IMCSD), April 2009.

This blueprint contains the strategies and initiatives needed for Singapore to achieve both economic growth and a good living environment over the next two decades.

- Steven F. Hayward, 'Index of Leading Environmental Indicators 2009'.

This publication highlights the significant environmental developments and milestones in the United States and worldwide.

- 'The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review', ADB, april 2009.

This report provides a review of the economics of climate change in the Southeast Asian region. It confirms that the region is highly vulnerable to climate change and demonstrates that a wide range

of adaptation measures are already being applied. The report also shows that the region has a great potential to contribute to greenhouse gas emission reduction, and that the costs to the region and globally of taking no early action against climate change could be very high.

The basic policy message is that efforts must be made to apply all feasible and economically viable adaptation and mitigation measures as key elements of a sustainable development strategy for Southeast Asia. It also argues that the current global economic crisis offers Southeast Asia an opportunity to start a transition towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy by introducing green stimulus programs that can simultaneously shore up economies, create jobs, reduce poverty, lower carbon emissions, and prepare for the worst effects of climate change.

- Varun Raj & David G. Victor, 'Climate Change and the Energy Challenge: A Pragmatic Approach for India', Program on Energy and Sustainable Development, Working Paper #83, March 2009.

This working paper elaborates on a framework for a strategy to inform which efforts offer the most leverage on warming emissions and which are most credible because they align with India's own interests.

Events

- Bonn Climate Change Talk, Germany, 29 March – 8 April 2009.

This was the 5th session of the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 5) and the 7th session of the Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 7). This was the first of three planned negotiating sessions before COP 15 in Copenhagen in December.

- REDD and Combating Illegal Logging: The 8th Meeting of the Asia Forest Partnership and AFP Dialogue, Bali Indonesia, 27-29 May 2009.

This dialogue will examine links between mechanisms to compensate countries for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and efforts to combat illegal logging and the associated timber trade. It will provide an opportunity for the many stakeholders in tropical forests to share information, to establish partnerships and to propose recommendations to policymakers.

FOOD SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'China to join UN to address food shortage in Asia, Pacific regions', 4 May 2009, *Xinhua*.
- 'Food prices remain high in developing countries', 23 April 2009, *FAO Newsroom*.
- 'New FAO food price database launched', 19 March 2009, *FAO Newsroom*.
- 'RP may allow more rice imports this year', 4 May 2009, *Reuters*.
- 'UN food agencies to join G8 agriculture ministers in Treviso', 19 April 2009, *FAO Newsroom*.
- 'Food security in RI: Time for policy change', 28 April 2009, *The Jakarta Post*.
- 'Science cash "to beat food riots"', 27 April 2009, *BBC*.

Papers, Reports and Briefs

- The Environmental Food Crisis: The Environment's Role in Averting Future Food Crises, UNEP, February 2009.

A new rapid response assessment report released by UNEP warns that up to 25% of the world's food production may become lost due to environmental breakdown by 2050 unless action is taken. Prepared by the Rapid Response Assessment Team at UNEP/GRID-Arendal and UNEP-WCMC, the

report provides the first summary by the UN of how climate change, water stress, invasive pests and land degradation may impact world food security, food prices and life on the planet and how we may be able to feed the world in a more sustainable manner.

The report concludes that we need to get smart and more creative about recycling food wastes and fish discards into animal feed. While major efforts have gone into increasing efficiency in the traditional energy sector, food energy efficiency has received too little attention.

- Robert Watson, 'Climate Change, Food Security and the Role of Agricultural Science and Technology', *Tyndall Briefing Note*, No. 35, April 2009.
- Joachim Von Braun, 'Exploring the Price Spike', *Choices: The magazine of food, farm and resource issues*, 1st Quarter 24(1), 2009.

Events

- The First G8 Agricultural Minister's Meeting: The world food emergency, Cison di Valmarino, 18-20 April 2009.

The delegations discussed on the means and strategies to increase production and productivity, the role of markets, the relation between agriculture and environment and the role of the international organization for the market stability. The delegations underlined the need to place agriculture and food security at the core of political agenda.

The G8 partners reached a consensus on a final declaration in which they commit to use all the tools available to alleviate the negative consequences of the current financial crisis on poverty and hunger, strengthen and encourage sustainable agriculture and food production, increase investments in agriculture and research, avoid unfair competition, agricultural trade distortions, including export restrictive measure, as agreed by the G20. They also recommended a monitoring and analysis of factors potentially affecting commodity markets, including speculation.

- Investing in Food Security in a Global Economy, joint OECD & FAO meeting, 5-6 April 2009.

A high level meeting of senior experts from FAO and the 30-nation Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to map out long-term investment and financing strategies to avert the menace of unprecedented levels of hunger.

ENERGY SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'UN atomic chief warns of nuclear power dangers', 20 April 2009, *Agence France Presse*.

Noting that more than 60 countries were contemplating the nuclear energy option amidst volatile energy pricing and global warming concerns, IAEA Chief Mohamed ElBaradei pointed out a need to ensure nuclear plant safety and the security of fissile materials. Under-funded, poorly managed and regulated nuclear plants remain in operation. He highlighted the risk of nuclear weapon proliferation, noting that intentions for peaceful nuclear use may change according to changing national security perceptions.

- 'Indonesian govt revives plan to build N-power plant in C. Java', 17 April 2009, *Asia in Focus*.

The Indonesian government, having earlier planned to construct a 1000-MW nuclear power plant in the Muria Peninsula, Central Java but met with strong local protests, has recently started looking at the plan again. Jakarta is optimistic that the power plant will be operational by 2016 as scheduled, provided there is no local opposition. Indonesian Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro was quoted saying that the government will look into a new schedule and new location.

- 'Surplus LNG fleet to keep lid on rates', 14 April 2009, *Lloyd's List*.

According to Merrill Lynch analysts, the present over 300-strong liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier

fleet will expand by 77 vessels over the next 3-4 years. This will help to keep charter rates low over the next year due to surplus supply of LNG carriers beyond the demand levels. Notwithstanding the slump in LNG demand in Asia, shipments had been diverted to European countries, which are partially relying on LNG imports to rebuild their energy inventories.

- 'Japan angered by fires at biggest nuclear plant', 14 April 2009, *Agence France Presse*.

A series of fires plagued the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant, which had previously been shut down after a minor radioactive leakage during a strong earthquake back in July 2007. This had provoked fears among local residents, as well as concerns among some geologists who highlighted that an offshore tectonic fault line can potentially trigger stronger earthquakes in future. This world's largest nuclear power plant could have been restarted early last month if not for the fires.

- 'Chinese, Russian hackers probing US power grid: report', 9 April 2009, *Agence France Presse*.

The emergent threat to critical energy infrastructure was recently highlighted by a *Wall Street Journal* report, quoting intelligence officials saying that 'cyber assailants' in the previous year had repeatedly attempted to hack into the critical US infrastructure, which includes the national power grid system. A hacker could inflict damages similar to or worse than an ordinary malfunction in the power lines. The cyber challenge is 'spiralling' as such threats continuously evolve overtime to be increasingly sophisticated.

- 'ANALYSIS – Bumper Asia oil harvest timely for future growth', 7 April 2009, *Reuters*.

Asia will witness its biggest crude oil output spike, which may compensate for declines at older oil-fields and OPEC supply reductions. Despite this development which spans across China to India and Malaysia, Asia will remain heavily dependent on imports from OPEC producers. Nevertheless, this bumper harvest is timely as the energy industry worries about current low investments to meet demand recovery in a few years after the present financial firestorm recedes.

- 'Kazakhstan offers to host nuclear fuel bank', 7 April 2009, *Associated Press Newswires*.

Having previously inherited and then given up the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal after the Soviet collapse, Kazakhstan offered to host an international nuclear fuel bank, a US initiative first mooted and endowed with a fund of US\$50 million in 2007. This plan, if given the go-ahead, would undermine claims by Iran and other states that they need to develop their own fuel enrichment programs. Nonetheless, Iranian President Mahmoud Admadinejad during a visit to Kazakhstan stated his support for this project.

Articles

- Trevor Houser, 'Energy Efficiency in Buildings: A Global Economic Perspective', Peterson Institute for International Economics, Policy Brief Number PB09-8, April 2009, pp. 1-5.

This policy brief is based on a study on the economics of building efficiency and first points out that it is possible to achieve 50-percent reduction in global carbon emissions by 2050 using existing technology and without compromising living standards. The brief goes on to argue that the cost of achieving aggressive, whole-building improvements in energy efficiency, while more expensive than past studies of individual efficiency improvements have suggested, remains manageable and cheaper than achieving comparable reductions in other sectors.

The author suggested the removal of barriers to efficiency investment in the building sector, to reduce the overall cost of climate policy while also alleviating the impact on consumers. New approaches to financing and improved building construction standards are among ways to facilitate transformation.

- Sharon Squassoni, 'Nuclear Energy: Rebirth or Resuscitation?', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009, pp. 1-92.

Despite the growing interest worldwide in nuclear energy, the author pointed out, the reality is more complicated than it is for the global nuclear energy sector. Without major changes in government policies and aggressive financial support, nuclear power instead of taking on an increasing share of the global electricity generation, will do precisely the opposite.

The author argued that government support for nuclear power market liabilities and other perennial issues, such as safety and proliferation, has been taken for granted in the projections for nuclear energy growth. In essence, the paper stresses the need for policymakers to exercise prudence with respect to financing, governance and technical feasibility issues before embarking on the nuclear path.

- Jerry Jackson, *'Energy Budgets at Risk'*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2008)

Targeting a non-technical audience, including policymakers, power operators and students, the author advocates EBaR, a quantitative concept which helps evaluate energy-efficiency investments through the use of risk management tools. EBaR analysis using an office building in Austin, Texas, indicated that its application increases cash flow and can achieve an annualised net saving at 30 percent or more of current energy costs.

The added benefit of using this quantitative approach, as advocated by the author, is a reduction of carbon emissions with energy cost savings more than offsetting the cost of energy-efficiency investments. In the light of the present global financial crisis which puts a squeeze on energy investments, and the spectre of global warming, the EBaR concept is certainly worth exploration by policymakers and energy industrial players.

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The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies is a research centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

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