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### **German Contributions to Mitigating the Effects of Diseases**

#### **Submitted by Germany**

1. Germany regards the spread of known and the appearance of new infectious diseases as a matter of concern. The associated risks to public health are a serious challenge to all countries and have also security-policy implications. While they caused only limited harm, the anthrax attacks in particular that occurred in September and October 2001 served to highlight the world's vulnerability in this respect. Phenomena such as AIDS, whose alarming implications became apparent over twenty years ago, the spread in multidrug-resistant bacteria, the appearance in Germany of individual cases of imported viral haemorrhagic fever, the growing number of regions where malaria and dengue fever are endemic, the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) as well as the appearance of West Nile fever in the United States, Avian influenza in East Asia and recurrent outbreaks of Ebola fever in Africa have focused attention on the threat infectious diseases can pose both to normal life and government functions.
2. An appropriate response to these challenges must in our view include a coordinated national and international strategy to identify early on and take effective action to control outbreaks of disease and pandemics in particular.
3. The steps taken by many countries to procure smallpox vaccine, the creation by the WHO of a smallpox vaccine pool to which Germany is contributing 2 million doses, the setting up of additional and modernization of existing laboratories with a view to expanding diagnostic and research facilities for highly infectious pathogens are part of an extensive catalogue of measures to enhance security in this respect. The new structures set up under national legislation provide a good basis for managing outbreaks of new as well as known diseases and taking complementary preventive action designed to enhance security. Another important step in this connection has been the setting up by the WHO in recent years, also with German support, of an EU-wide Communicable Diseases Network establishing an Early Warning and Response System (EWRS). The EU and its member states have also established a Rapid Alert System (RAS-BICHAT) to deal with chemical and biological threats. Thanks to these networks, it is now possible to take

action at an early stage to prevent the spread of such diseases. That is the purpose, too, of the recent endeavor of updating of the WHO's International Health Regulations and the intensive efforts now under way to establish a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

4. The current HIV/AIDS pandemic demonstrates the threat such phenomena pose to countries' economic development and social stability. To alleviate its impact Germany is contributing annually some 300 million euro through bilateral and multilateral channels to the international fight against HIV/AIDS. Over the period 2003-2006 the European Commission is allocating 351 million euro to efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The money will be spent on a wide range of activities, including medical treatment, geared to helping above all the poorest countries and the most vulnerable sections of society.

5. Germany firmly believes the best way to come to grips with outbreaks of new and recurring diseases is international cooperation, for in a world in which economic ties and tourism bring people into ever closer contact, infectious agents travel huge distances at great speed with no regard to state borders and create problems not just for one but for a large number of countries.

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