

World Bank to support Mexico's Strategy to fight Swine Flu with \$205 million

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Washington, April 26, 2009—**World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick** today announced that the World Bank will support Mexico's efforts to fight the spread of the Swine Flu virus with more than \$205 million in fast disbursing funds.

At the closing press conference of the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings, Zoellick made the announcement together with **Mexico's Finance Minister, Agustín Carstens**.

"We're extremely grateful for the prompt response by the World Bank – such promptness is always very, very appreciated," said Carstens. "But beyond resources, what is also important is all the experience that the World Bank has accumulated in precisely having assisted other countries in this type of situation."

US\$25 million will be re-directed to this purpose from the ongoing Mexico health project (PROCEDES) to meet urgent needs such as the purchase of drugs and related supplies.

In addition the World Bank has started the preparation of a **US\$180** million project under a Global Facility for Avian Influenza to help the Government of Mexico finance the full range of strategic, epidemiologic, regulatory, institutional, and operational activities needed for an effective response and allow for retroactive financing which would allow financing expenditures being made currently.

"Our first, second, and third focus is on people's health and lives," said Zoellick. He explained that the World Bank is also helping Mexico with the lessons learned from other similar experiences in fighting SARS and Avian Flu. "Part of what we're doing is also connecting Mexico with other governments that have had this issue. When a government gets hit by this, it moves fast. The best thing you can do is talk to somebody else who has been through this crisis"

The project will be fast-tracked so that funds can be disbursed in a period of 3-5 weeks. The World Bank will also assist Mexico in assessing the economic impact of the crisis and helping it to devise counter-measures to ensure that the effects of the outbreak are kept in check.

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Broadcast quality clips of today's announcement are available for download. For inquiries contact Mehreen Sheikh at the World Bank on (202) 458 7336