

# **INTERVENTION OF JORGE ALBERTO LOZOYA, AMBASSADOR OF MEXICO TO MALAYSIA**

## **EMERGING PANDEMIC THREATS PROGRAM / PREDICT**

USAID/PREDICT Annual Meeting.  
Impiana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 2:00pm

**Dato' Dr. Abd Aziz Bin Jamaluddin**, Chief Director of Veterinary Services,  
Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Malaysia,  
**Dr. Stephen Morse**, Director of the USAID/PREDICT Program,  
**Dr. Peter Daszak**, President of EcoHealth Alliance  
**Dr. Murray Trostle**, Deputy Director for USAID's Avian Influenza Unit,  
**Dr. Jonna A. K. Mazet**, Co-Director of the Wildlife Health Center, University of California at Davis,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The destruction of the natural environment and the emergence of infectious diseases are two major challenges that mankind faces today. It is thus essential to fully understand the relationship between these two factors in order to prevent and predict pandemics. It is only with local involvement at all levels that these challenges can be successfully faced.

That is why your USAID/PREDICT Project is a most exciting and promising scientific endeavor. Within the USAID's Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT) Program, the idea to search for previously unreported pathogens and to understand their natural history to properly model and predict their behavior is a tool of immeasurable importance.

Furthermore, the fact that the PREDICT Project is to be implemented in more than twenty countries around the world, ensures that the answers you obtain will have great practical relevance for the entire planet. In a globalized context

such as the one we live in, you have scientists from the United States, Mexico and Malaysia plus those of Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, India, Laos, Peru, Ruanda, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and Vietnam, all involved in the Project at the level of peers and local implementers. Not only are you recruiting the best scientists for the job, you are also ensuring the success of the ownership of the results by your local partners. This is the way the world works today.

As you all know, within a few days, Mexico will be hosting in Cancun the Global Climate Change COP 16. The results of the PREDICT Project will contribute significantly to improve our understanding of the interaction between climate change and emerging infectious diseases; I am sure that they will be integrated in future COPs.

The Mexican Federal Government is firmly endorsing Mexico's involvement in the PREDICT Project. As a megadiverse country and one of the top fifteen economies in the world; with a population that has intimate connections to the natural world; and with a strong and growing cadre of internationally renowned scientists, Mexico is a very appropriate country to carry out the activities contemplated in PREDICT.

In addition, there are previous and encouraging scientific ties between Mexico and Malaysia along these lines. The collaborative activities between the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the University of Malaysia in Sabah, and the Ecohealth Alliance in New York can serve as a clear example to optimize the results of PREDICT and replicate other similar South-South initiatives in training, student and researcher exchanges, and mutual learning. Professor Rodrigo

Medellin, of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and Professor Abdul Hamid Ahmed of the University of Malaysia in Sabah will undoubtedly provide the required leadership to assure the growth and expansion of this multilateral collaboration.

Wishing you the great accomplishments that PREDICT deserves, I would like to leave you with a thought that I firmly believe in and that was formulated by the Ecohealth Alliance team: “Successful global strategies for biodiversity conservation require increasing reliance on local leadership and major investment in local capacity”. Thank you very much.