From: Routh, Jennifer (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6)>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2020 4:52 PM
To: Conrad, Patricia (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6)>; NIAID FOG <fog@niaid.nih.gov>
Cc: NIAID COGCORE <COGCORE@mail.nih.gov>; NIAID Media Inquiries <mediainquiries@niaid.nih.gov>
Subject: interview request: draft responses for Greek newspaper

Reporter: Theodora Tsoli
Organization: Greek newspaper To VIMA (www.tovima.gr)
Phone #(s): (b) (6), thtsoli@tovima.gr
Subject: COVID-19
Deadline: Monday 2/24

The reporter emailed questions for ASF. I have drafted proposed responses for his review, also attached.

1. **Do you believe that SARS-COV2 is capable of causing a pandemic? Are you expecting many secondary transmissions of the virus outside China?**
   A pandemic is generally defined as sustained transmission of a new pathogen in multiple regions of the world. COVID-19 does not yet meet that definition, and I hope that China and other countries in Asia with some transmission are able to contain the outbreak. However, it is possible that COVID-19 could become a pandemic. It would not be surprising to see additional secondary transmissions of the virus outside of China.

2. **Chinese authorities are reporting a decline of new cases. Could we say that the virus has peaked and maybe it will slow down? When are you expecting to have a clearer picture about the evolution of this epidemic?**
   Although the number of **daily** cases in China appears to have gone down, it is too early to tell if this is really a decline in the outbreak.

3. **Could the virus become endemic and give seasonal outbreaks?**
   If China is not able to contain the outbreak, it is possible COVID-19 could become endemic and lead to seasonal outbreaks. However, it is too early to know the likelihood of this scenario.

4. **What about its transmissibility? Some experts say that WHO is underestimating it's transmissibility. Could the reality be different maybe because, among other things, many cases stay undetected?**
   Because of the many unknowns about SARS-CoV-2, it is difficult to make any firm conclusions regarding overall transmissibility and severity. However, it appears to be much more transmissible than SARS. Also, there are likely asymptomatic COVID-19 infections that are not getting counted because people do not go to the doctor for testing or treatment if they are not sick.