

# 2019 ASEAN LEADERS' DECLARATION ON ASEAN VACCINE SECURITY AND SELF-RELIANCE

*Adopted in Bangkok, Thailand on 2 November 2019*

**WE**, the Heads of State and Government of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, on the occasion of the 35th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, on 2 November 2019:

**RESPECT** the independency and self-reliance of ASEAN Member States (AMS), as well as the regional and global solidarity;

**RECALL** the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP), which was endorsed by the 194 Member States of the World Health Assembly in May 2012 to achieve the Decade of Vaccines vision by delivering universal access to immunization. The GVAP mission is to improve health by extending by 2020 and beyond the full benefits of immunization to all people, regardless of where they are born, who they are or where they live;

**REAFFIRM** our commitment to the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda and the ASEAN Health Cluster 3: Strengthening Health System and Access to Care, to collectively work towards vaccine security and self-reliance in ASEAN;

**RECOGNIZE** overwhelming evidence that demonstrates the benefits of immunization as one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions known. Vaccines have saved countless lives, eradicated smallpox, lowered the global incidence of polio by 99 percent and reduced illness, disability and death from Vaccine-preventable Diseases (VPDs) such as diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, rubella and hepatitis B, among others;

**EMPHASIZE** that VPDs may continue to spread in the region due to the massive population mobility across countries. VPD occurrences therefore need to be continuously monitored while VPD prevention and control programs need to be continuously implemented, tirelessly and deliberately, by every AMS;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that in order to fight VPDs effectively, the most powerful strategy strongly recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) is to ensure sufficient supply of essential vaccines used in all National Immunization Programs (NIP) concerned;

**REITERATE** that "Vaccine Security" has been defined by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as the "sustained, uninterrupted and timely supply of affordable vaccine of assured quality". By definition, three critical elements in assuring vaccine security are 1) guaranteed procurement of vaccines through firm contracts with manufacturers; 2) secured, multi-year allocations for vaccine financing; and, 3) long-term accurate forecasting of vaccine requirements;

**EXPRESS** deep concern that essential vaccines shortage in AMS, even if occurring sporadically for a short period of time, directly hampers vaccine security by increasing the risk of VPD outbreaks among vulnerable or unimmunized persons of all age, thus leading to public health emergencies;

**NOTE** with concern that vaccine shortage occurs due to challenges including manufacturing complexities, supply chain constraints and limited long-term forecasting that would require collective determination to address them;

**RECALL** that between 2014 and 2018, three regional workshops were held in Thailand among relevant officials, stakeholders and experts to explore if and how AMS could collectively foster vaccine security and self-reliance in the region;

**BELIEVE** that AMS can, collectively, attain AVSSR to avoid incidental vaccine shortage and improve the supply of affordable, quality vaccines for normal and emergency situations both at the national and ASEAN-wide levels for the benefits of the people of the ASEAN. Reduction of VPD burden and reduction of healthcare expenditure in AMS would be among the evident outcomes of attaining AVSSR;

**HENCE, WE HEREBY DECLARE TO:**

1. **ENDEAVOR** to attain AVSSR, which has been identified as a priority strategy for health in ASEAN;
2. **STRENGTHEN** the cooperation and efforts among AMS to attain AVSSR through capacity building and training, sharing of best practices, as well as other appropriate developmental actions in line with national laws, policy and regulation in respective AMS;
3. **CALL** on development partners, intergovernmental agencies, regional organizations, experts and other stakeholders, to support and promote regional collaboration in the development of AVSSR;
4. **SUPPORT** the development of the AVSSR strategic and action plans to achieve a healthy ASEAN community through timely, equitable access to affordable, safe, and quality vaccines;
5. **SUPPORT** the development of appropriate platforms for the operationalization of the AVSSR strategic and action plans;
6. **TASK** the concerned ASEAN Ministers responsible for health and other relevant sectorial bodies to monitor the implementation of this declaration towards achieving the aspirations of this declaration.

**ADOPTED** in Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand on this Second Day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Nineteen, in a single original copy in the English language.