

2020 STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL ASEAN-CHINA FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING ON THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Adopted in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 20 February 2020

We, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the People's Republic of China, met in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, on 20 February 2020 for the Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);

NOTING the ASEAN Chairman's Statement on ASEAN collective response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 issued on 14 February 2020, which expressed concern over the outbreak of the respiratory illness caused by COVID-19;

RECOGNISING the joint emergency responses of ASEAN and China to major challenges and their tradition of solidarity and mutual assistance in times of difficulty;

NOTING that the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2016-2020), encourages deepening cooperation between ASEAN and China on, among others, preventing and controlling emerging and reemerging infectious and communicable diseases;

RECOGNISING the cross-border challenges posed by COVID-19 and the important contribution to global public health by strengthening ASEAN-China and international cooperation to collectively tackle these challenges to protect peoples' health, safety and the socio-economic development of countries;

STRESSING the important role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global campaign to control and contain the spread of COVID-19, recognising the importance of health measures under the International Health Regulations (2005);

EMPHASISING the growing urgency and need for cooperation in COVID-19 surveillance, prevention, detection and control given the fact that ASEAN and China have close links and are each other's major tourist destinations with an annual travel flow of over 65 million visits and China being the largest trading partner of ASEAN while ASEAN is the second largest trading partner of China;

RECOGNISING ASEAN and China's decisive measures to address COVID-19 through prompt sharing of information and other significant efforts to contain the epidemic and to protect regional and global public health security;

EXPRESSING full confidence in China's abilities to succeed in overcoming the epidemic with China appreciating the sympathy, support and assistance offered by ASEAN Member States to its response efforts;

ALSO EXPRESSING deep condolences on the loss of lives, extending sympathies to those suffering from or threatened by COVID-19 and commending the medical professionals, scientists, researchers, quarantine officials and all others working courageously on the frontlines of the battle against the outbreak;

To this end, we hereby agree to:

1. Step up cooperation in the region against COVID-19 by sharing information and best practices in a timely manner, including exchanging available epidemiological information, technical guidelines and solutions for epidemic prevention and control, diagnosis, treatment and surveillance, with a view to enhancing capacity in emergency preparedness and response;
2. Strengthen cooperation within ASEAN-led mechanisms and with external partners to address COVID-19 in a comprehensive and effective manner, taking into account the different levels of development of health systems in the region;

3. Strengthen cooperation in risk communication and community engagement readiness and response to ensure that people are rightly and thoroughly informed on COVID-19 and are not being misled by misinformation and fake news pertaining to COVID-19;
4. Strengthen policy dialogue and exchanges on the latest development of the COVID-19, including its control and treatment, and its related study and research through existing mechanisms such as the ASEAN-China Health Ministers' Meeting (ACHMM) and the ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development (ACSOMHD) to fully implement the ASEAN-China MOU on Health Cooperation and support more mutually agreed cooperation projects;
5. Work together to enhance the capacity to prevent and control emerging and re-emerging infectious and communicable diseases such as COVID-19, engage in exchanges of relevant data and technology, experience and capacity building, including training of health and medical personnel, mutual visits of medical experts and other health workers, as well as the possibility of holding an ASEAN-China Workshop on Health Emergency Personnel, strengthen cooperation between Centers for Disease Control and relevant institutions of ASEAN and China, and set up a sub-forum during the Third ASEAN-China Forum on Health Cooperation to be held this year to conduct in-depth discussions on the prevention and control of COVID-19;
6. Mitigate supply chain disruptions of urgent medical goods and promote research and development of medicines and vaccines;
7. Support enterprises affected by the epidemic, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as appropriate, including through promotion of digital economy to facilitate economic activity during epidemics and make full use of the ASEAN-China Year of Digital Economy Cooperation;
8. Support the use of information and communication technologies for the continued development of public health.
9. Commit to reducing the impact of the epidemic on the economic and social development of all affected countries, jointly maintaining people-to-people exchanges, trade and investment activities in the region, and, based on the progress of the prevention and control of the epidemic, resume and enhance exchanges and cooperation

We are determined to continue working together to deal with this dangerous disease and to address the adverse impacts of COVID-19, and agreed to brief our Leaders on the outcome of this meeting and welcome their guidance on proposals for their engagements at an appropriate time. We encourage the relevant ASEAN-China mechanisms to implement the measures outlined in this Statement.