

2020 CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL ASEAN-UNITED STATES FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Adopted on 23 April 2020

1. We, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the United States Secretary of State held the Special ASEAN- United States Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) via video conference on 23 April 2020 (22 April 2020 Washington, D.C. time) to discuss ASEAN-United States cooperation in public health emergencies, especially in countering the COVID-19 pandemic, and our shared commitment to strengthening the ASEAN-United States Strategic Partnership. The Meeting was cochaired by His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR, and His Excellency Michael Pompeo, Secretary of State of the United States. Foreign Ministers of all ASEAN Member States and, the Secretary-General of ASEAN participated in the meeting. Representatives from the ASEAN Senior Officials (SOM), ASEAN Senior Officials for Health Development (SOMHD), ASEAN Senior Economic Officials (SEOM), and the Senior Officials' Committee for the ASEAN SocioCultural Community (SOCA), and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) also participated in the meeting.
2. We expressed deep condolences on the tragic loss of lives due to COVID-19, extended our sympathies to those suffering from or threatened by this crisis, and expressed gratitude and support to all medical professionals, healthcare workers and other frontline personnel as we continue to fight this pandemic.
3. The United States congratulated ASEAN Member States on the successful convening of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April 2020 which demonstrated ASEAN's highest-level commitment to collectively respond to the COVID-19, in line with the spirit of a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN.
4. We recognized the crucial importance of international cooperation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and reaffirmed our commitment to fostering global collaboration by placing paramount importance on global health and putting forward trust, spirit of cooperation and solidarity in our conduct and relations with all parties of the international community. In light of this, we also reaffirmed the value of the ASEANUnited States Strategic Partnership in maintaining peace, security, and stability in the region, as well as in strengthening coordination to face the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 and to promote the health, safety and well-being of our one billion-strong population.
5. We reaffirmed our commitment to work towards an inclusive, peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous region as well as further cooperation to advance human capital development in the region. We commit to enhance our partnership in public health, reaffirming the importance of investment in resilient health systems and biomedical industry to strengthen human capital and recognizing the urgent need to prioritize global health security. In this regard, we welcome USAID and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to continue to play a significant role in the capacity building of ASEAN's health workers. One example of such cooperation is the IMPACT-MED mechanism, where USAID/Vietnam is expanding upon its partnership with Harvard Medical School and other partners in order to strengthen and expand infection control protocols in Vietnamese hospitals to combat COVID-19.

6. We highlighted the importance of ASEAN-United States decades-long collaboration in supporting international cooperation and national governments' and authorities' capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases, including COVID-19. We acknowledged that public health is one of the cornerstones of stability and prosperity of our nations and the wider region. We encouraged enhanced sharing of experience and best practices in epidemiological research and development, clinical treatment, research and development of vaccines and anti-viral medicines, enhancing capacity and preparedness to respond to public health emergencies. In this regard, we welcome active engagement between relevant agencies of ASEAN and the United States, and commend the productive outcome of the ASEAN-U.S High-level Interagency video-conference on Public Health Emergencies on 1 April 2020.
7. We noted with satisfaction ongoing efforts by individual ASEAN Member States and the United States and commend the proactive role and timely actions taken by ASEAN and United States Health Sectors to control the spread of COVID-19, including through various measures in the prevention, detection and mitigation of the disease.
8. We noted measures taken by ASEAN Member States and United States to improve economic stability and resilience including through economic stimulus and to assist people and business affected by COVID-19, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and vulnerable groups.
9. We reaffirmed the need of a series of policies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on the economy through economic stimulus, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, monetary and financial sector policy, as well as commitment to introduce more programmes and funds to keep economic growth momentum.
10. We encouraged exploration of further cooperation towards post-pandemic recovery, stimulate economic development and financial resilience, restore growth and prevent potential risks of global economic recession.
11. We affirmed that emergency measures designed to address COVID-19, if deemed necessary, should be targeted, proportionate, transparent, and temporary, and not create unnecessary barriers to travel and trade or disruption to global supply chains. We emphasized our shared commitment to ensuring, to the maximum extent possible consistent with public health, the stable supply and the swift and continued flow of food, medicines, medical supplies and equipment and other essential goods and commodities as well as the normal flow of trade in other goods and services, and investment across borders to sustain among others, critical economic activities and ensure food security. We highlighted the important role of the private sector in maintaining supply chains and ensuring the production, distribution and delivery of essential products during the crisis.
12. We acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on international connectivity and committed to striving towards a common approach to implementing travel restrictions including clear guidelines, based on science and data, with a shared understanding of when and how such restrictions should be imposed and relaxed.
13. We reiterated the importance of effective risk communication, transparency and openness in sharing timely and accurate information on COVID-19 developments, both to domestic publics and international partners and fighting misinformation and disinformation.
14. The United States thanked ASEAN Member States for their support in facilitating the transit of American citizens seeking to return to the United States during the COVID-19 crisis. ASEAN Member States appreciated and looked forward to United States continuous efforts to update ASEAN diplomats with information on COVID-19 measures taken with respect to their citizens and provide them with appropriate support for matters related to the pandemic.

15. ASEAN Member States exchanged experiences and best practices on measures for cooperation with the United States on prevention, detection and control of COVID-19. ASEAN Member States encouraged the United States to support the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to address COVID-19 and future public health emergencies, and the planned establishment of a Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies to enable rapid response to emergency medical supply needs as well as to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms on health including the relevant East Asia Summit (EAS) forum on strengthening the regional preparedness and capacity for infectious diseases with epidemic and pandemic potential and to take the necessary steps to follow up, in a timely manner.
16. We acknowledged that all persons infected by COVID-19, should have access to essential healthcare services.
17. We are committed to working closely with multilateral organisations and the international community while emphasizing the urgent need for a collective global leadership for coordinated response in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing its profound socio-economic impacts, towards securing the welfare of our people and sustaining economic growth.
18. ASEAN Member States complimented the United States for its assistance to respective ASEAN Member States to combat the spread of COVID-19, including the provision of over US\$ 35.3 million in assistance to date. The United States reemphasized its commitment to providing international public health assistance and offered continued support for ASEAN Member States in need of additional assistance.
19. The United States outlined its U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures initiative, which is intended to build partnerships with ASEAN that focus on research, health system capacity, and developing human capital so that ASEAN countries have adequate medical and health capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and future health needs. The United States announced the launch of the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures Alumni Network and pledged continued support for exchange programs that have included the training of 2,400 ASEAN Member States' medical and health professionals to date. These programs have built people-to-people ties between researchers and healthcare workers across ASEAN and the United States.
20. The United States expressed strong support for helping ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat to develop region-wide disease control structures that could strengthen the resilience and capacity of public health systems across ASEAN.
21. We recognized views expressed on the immediate need to focus on the fight against COVID-19, while promoting trust, confidence, dialogue and cooperation to maintain peace, security, stability and the rule of law in the region.
22. We welcomed existing efforts to strengthen ASEAN-United States collaboration on COVID-19 response, including a proposed videoconference between ASEAN Health Ministers and the U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services. We discussed further steps to strengthen ASEAN-United States collaboration on COVID-19 response, including joint cooperation in research and development as well as sharing of scientific knowledge and innovative technologies, collaboration in the development and access to vaccines to curb the COVID-19 pandemic and through high-level engagement, possible collaboration in joint research for medicine and vaccine, as well as joint efforts in scaling-up their production once found and on public health cooperation more broadly and extensively. We plan to expand official engagement between ASEAN health sectors and U.S. health sectors, including through participation in SOM and Ministerial-level meetings of ASEAN health officials, as appropriate.
23. We look forward to continued ASEAN-United States engagement through existing networks and platforms under the ASEAN Health sector, as well as the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE) and International Health Regulations mechanisms, to prepare for and address public health emergencies and safeguard the health and well-being of all our peoples. ASEAN Member States looked forward to continued U.S. assistance in making these existing ASEAN mechanisms more proactive and anticipatory of any type of infectious diseases.

24. We also welcomed deepening collaboration between ASEAN and the United States in the post-pandemic recovery, to counter the longer-term socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 by reinforcing our trade and investment, and cooperation in the digital economy, MSMEs and innovation.