

2020 JOINT STATEMENT SPECIAL VIDEO CONFERENCE OF HEALTH MINISTERS OF ASEAN AND THE UNITED STATES IN ENHANCING COOPERATION ON CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) RESPONSE

Adopted on 30 April 2020

WE, the Ministers of Health of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Member States, 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 Viet Nam, and the United States (U.S.) Secretary for Health and Human Services, discussed and reaffirmed on 30 April 2020 through a Special Video Conference of Health Ministers of ASEAN and U.S. in Enhancing Cooperation on COVID-19 Response, our collective commitment and cooperation to stop the global pandemic of COVID-19 and associated public health emergencies by enhancing preparedness, prevention, detection and response.

EXPRESSING our deep condolences on the tragic loss of lives due to COVID-19, extending sympathies to those suffering from or endangered by this crisis, and gratitude and support to all medical, health and other frontline personnel as we continue to fight the pandemic;

VALUING the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership in strengthening cooperation to face the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19, by delivering, in a timely manner, concrete and effective measures to ensure the safety and well-being of our combined one billion-strong population;

RECOGNIZING the crucial importance of international cooperation in fighting the COVID19 pandemic and reaffirming our commitment to fostering global cooperation in public health as one of the cornerstones of stability and prosperity of our nations and the wider region by putting forward trust, spirit of cooperation and solidarity in our conduct;

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of ASEAN-U.S. collaboration in supporting international cooperation and national governments' and authorities' capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases, especially COVID-19;

AFFIRMING our commitment on strengthening the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats through transparent, timely and accurate information sharing and reporting on infectious disease outbreaks;

ACKNOWLEDGING ongoing proactive and timely efforts taken by ASEAN Member States and the United States in controlling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through various measures taken by their governments;

NOTING the historic nature of this video conference as the first formal engagement between the 10 ASEAN Ministers of Health and the U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services;

WE, the ASEAN Health Ministers and U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services, agree to strengthen our collective response to COVID-19 by:

1. CONTINUING transparent, timely and accurate sharing of information, experiences, and best practices on COVID-19 and measures for prevention, detection, control and response, including updates on clinical management and treatment as well as sourcing of adequate test kits, ventilators, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other medical supplies including medicines and vaccines.
2. ENHANCING cooperation in human resource development, including but not limited to: joint research, studies, and exercises in the areas of COVID-19 infection control, pandemic preparedness and response; training for medical and health personnel and laboratory analysts; and, biomedical research and laboratory facilities and systems for COVID-19.

3. **WORKING** towards leveraging cooperation and technical assistance in handling infectious diseases, particularly in developing and producing effective, safe and affordable vaccine, immunomodulator and antiviral medicines, as well as in ensuring equitable access to vaccines and antiviral medicines.
4. **STRENGTHENING** collective efforts to promote the normal flow of essential medical goods and other medical supplies, and ease required access to remote areas in the region, while affirming that any emergency measures taken, 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.
5. **WELCOMING** the announcement of the ASEAN Member States' plan to establish the COVID-19 Response Fund to address COVID-19 and future public health emergencies, and a Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies to enable rapid response to emergency medical supply needs, with the partnership of external partners.
6. **REEMPHASIZING** commitment by the United States in providing international public health assistance as exemplified by the U.S. provision of over \$35.3 million in COVID19 related assistance to respective ASEAN Member States to date, and continuing support for exchange and training programmes of ASEAN medical and health professionals, including through the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures Initiative, while also offering support for those ASEAN Member States in need of additional assistance.
7. **SUPPORTING** regional mechanisms established by the ASEAN Health Cooperation that have ensured successful regional preparedness and response to COVID-19 cases
8. **COMMITTING** to working closely with multilateral organisations and the international community while emphasising the urgent need for a collective and coordinated global response in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. **COMMITTING** to invest and strengthen health systems through Universal Health Coverage, in particular primary health care and health workforce as strong foundations for health security.
10. **LOOKING FORWARD** to the continued ASEAN-U.S. engagement through well-established existing networks and platforms under the ASEAN Health Sector, as well as International Health Regulations Mechanisms, to counter and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and safeguard the health and well-being of all our peoples.