

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

Adopted on 17 June 2020

We, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and the Russian Federation, held the Special ASEAN-Russia Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 via video conference on 17 June 2020 to discuss ASEAN-Russia cooperation in countering COVID-19 and other areas of mutual concern in this challenging time,

Expressing our deep concerns over the continued spread and severity of COVID-19, which the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, and its adverse impacts on the health and well-being of peoples around the world and on global socio-economic development,

Conveying our sorrow on the loss of life and suffering caused by this pandemic,

Extending our gratitude and support to all medical professionals, healthcare workers and other frontline personnel,

Welcoming ASEAN's successful convening of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April 2020 and the subsequent adoption of the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 that demonstrated ASEAN's highest-level commitment on collective response to the outbreak of COVID-19, in the spirit of a cohesive and responsive ASEAN. Supporting ASEAN's multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, whole-of-community approach to address the multi-faceted challenges posed by COVID-19,

Welcoming the adoption of the COVID-19 response resolution by the virtual 73rd session of the World Health Assembly on 18-19 May 2020 and recognising the important coordinating role of the WHO in the global campaign to control and contain the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious and non-infectious diseases, as well as acknowledging the significance of implementing health measures under the International Health Regulations (2005) as a key global instrument for early warning and prevention, control and public health response to the international spread of infectious diseases and in addressing public health challenges such as COVID-19,

Fostering people-centered policies in all efforts to respond to pandemics, ensuring that people are equally provided with health care, treatment and consular assistance,

Maintaining the momentum of economic integration and openness in the region, ensuring supply chain connectivity, keeping up trade activities as well as implementing economic and financial support packages to stabilize manufacturing operations and business activities,

Acknowledging the unprecedented severity of the virus and its threat to humanity and emphasizing the importance of solidified and concerted regional and global efforts as well as putting aside differences and undertaking collective actions by all parties of the international community to address the humanitarian, health, social, economic and financial consequences of the pandemic,

Supporting the appeal by the United Nations Secretary General for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world and the waiving of sanctions that can undermine countries' capacities to respond to the pandemic by ensuring access to food, medical equipment, medicines, other essential goods and healthcare. In light of this, also encourage all parties to renounce unilateral policies and actions that have the potential to undermine efforts and conducive situation essential to overcome the pandemic,

Calling for enhanced collaboration in the development of vaccines, providing access to medicines for COVID-19 and other diseases in future public health emergencies, and making them available to all at affordable prices as global public goods,

Emphasising the role of ASEAN-Russia Strategic Partnership in fostering peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, including through the maintenance of friendly dialogue and consultations, promotion of mutual trust and confidence, peaceful resolution of disputes.

WE HEREBY RESOLVE TO:

STRENGTHEN cooperation through ASEAN-Russia Strategic Partnership and ASEAN-led regional mechanisms, in particular the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), in a spirit of responsibility, solidarity, cooperation and collective efforts in order to prevent, detect, control and respond to the spread of infectious diseases, especially COVID-19, and address their severe and multi-faceted impacts;

ENCOURAGE regular, transparent and timely sharing of information and best practices, including exchanges of available epidemiological information, models for forecasting, technical guidelines and solutions for prevention, detection, control, treatment and response to COVID-19; extending mutual technical support in the prevention, containment and control of transmission as well as clinical treatment of infected cases; promote ASEAN-Russia scientific cooperation in epidemiological and viral molecular/genetic research and development of vaccines and anti-viral medicines as part of collective overall efforts to enhance national and regional public health systems' capacities in responding to public health emergencies that adhere to the objectives of efficiency, safety, equitability, accessibility and affordability which are aimed to ensure, among others, equal access to vaccine;

APPRECIATE Russia's assistance to ASEAN Member States in the development of human resources and capacity for the public health sector including through continuing training courses for ASEAN specialists at the International Research Center for the Study of Biosafety and Human Well-Being in the Asia-Pacific region in Vladivostok, and to explore expanding cooperation in this sphere, such as by setting up a network of experts on public health emergencies for future need;

REAFFIRM commitment to expand cooperation to enhance regional capacities for pandemic preparedness, detection and response in line with the International Health Regulations (2005) by undertaking concrete activities such as establishing a platform for consultations between agencies responsible for public health, prevention and control of infectious diseases of ASEAN Member States and Russia, enhancing surveillance and laboratory network capabilities, as well as experience sharing and collaboration in research and development of vaccines and new technology for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases;

LEVERAGE on the regional cooperation established by the ASEAN and Russia health sector that ensured cohesive and responsive measures in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts and enhance communication as well as establish humanitarian cooperation between ASEAN Member States' agencies responsible for prevention and control of infectious diseases and Russia's Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor) as part of overall efforts to enhance ASEAN's and Russia's preparedness and capacity in responding to communicable and emerging infectious diseases including pandemics and other potential public health and biological threats;

WELCOME the establishment of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and a regional reserve of medical supplies as well as Russia's willingness to contribute to achieving the goals of these mechanisms through swift mobilization and utilization of resources of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund for joint ASEAN-Russia projects on addressing public health emergencies to ensure adequate financing to contain the pandemic and protect our peoples;

CONTINUE close and constructive coordination with regard to supporting and facilitating the return of nationals of ASEAN Member States and Russia to their respective countries should they wish to do so; enhance cooperation to provide appropriate support and assistance to nationals of ASEAN and Russia, especially the most vulnerable, who stay, work, and study in each other's countries; working towards the dignity, health, well-being, safety, fair and effective treatment of those affected by COVID-19 as well as facilitating the movement of people where appropriate;

CONTINUE to uphold ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific region which should be built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms and based on shared values, norms, and principles of international law, equality and mutual benefit;

WELCOME Russia's initiative to adopt an EAS Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Collective Capacity in Epidemics Prevention and Response at the 15th East Asia Summit as an important and timely step towards enhancing practical cooperation on pandemic preparedness and counter measures in the Asia-Pacific region; including the establishment of EAS mechanism to counter epidemics.

FURTHER DISCUSS within the framework of EAS the possibility of establishing a format of EAS Meetings of the Heads of Agencies for Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases and respective Senior Officials to strengthen regional cooperation aimed at enhancing epidemic preparedness;

COMMEND the active role of the ADMM and the Defense Minister of the Russian Federation in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasising the importance of promoting defence cooperation, particularly in the area of military medicine through the ADMM-Plus and its Experts' Working Group on Military Medicine and the ASEAN Center of Military Medicine;

ENSURE long-term resilience and minimize disruptions in global and regional supply chains, especially in the flow of essential goods and commodities including medical supplies and equipment, medicines, food and agricultural products as well as other essential goods while keeping markets open for trade and investment and ensuring that measures deemed necessary for public health emergency response are targeted, proportionate, fair, transparent, temporary and consistent with the World Trade Organisation rules and take into consideration other relevant World Health Organisation guidelines, including the WCO/WHO HS Classification Reference for COVID-19 Medical Supplies;

COOPERATE to ensure timely, equitable access to affordable, safe and quality vaccines and new drugs which have been developed to address COVID-19 and other pandemics;

INTENSIFY cooperation for adequate provision of medicines, essential medical supplies and equipment, including, but not limited to diagnostic tools and personal protective equipment;

PROMOTE maintenance of necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating to the extent possible the essential movement of people, including business travels, while ensuring the safeguarding of public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic as well as to minimize socio-economic impacts of COVID-19;

ENHANCE collaboration between ASEAN and Russia in expediting the post- pandemic recovery process and countering the socio-economic impacts of COVID- 19, restore growth and connectivity by reinforcing trade and investment, cooperation in the sphere of finance, monetary and digital economy, innovation and tourism while paying special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) suffering from the impact of COVID-19;

ENCOURAGE the sharing of digital tools and practices used to limit the spread of COVID-19 through open-sourcing and the use of science, technology and innovation, as well as digital economic platforms and other alternative mechanisms to facilitate communications, business activities and distance learning to overcome constraints caused by travel restrictions and measures adopted to contain the further spread of COVID-19 while also promoting stronger cooperation to ensure secure international information and communications technologies (ICTs) environment and enhance countries' resilience to threats arising from the use of ICTs;

ENGAGE in close coordination and cooperation with the WHO, relevant organisations and the international community as well as encourage public-private partnership (PPP) and a whole-of-society approach in the global fight against the pandemic, while tackling the profound social and economic consequences of COVID-19, protecting people's well-being and sustaining growth;

REAFFIRM commitment to maintain a politically peaceful and stable region, where national security cannot be ensured at the expense of others;

INTENSIFY efforts, especially in the post-pandemic period, to collaborate on the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), in particular in ASEAN – Russia format on mutual areas of interest;

PROMOTE new initiatives and opportunities for cooperation with a view to further contribute to the overall efforts to counter misinformation and fake news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that people are well informed of the latest facts of the current situation; and

INTENSIFY efforts to prevent and mitigate stigmatization and discrimination of citizens of countries that have experienced outbreaks of infectious diseases.