

2015 EAST ASIA SUMMIT STATEMENT ON ENHANCING REGIONAL HEALTH SECURITY RELATING TO INFECTIOUS DISEASES WITH EPIDEMIC AND PANDEMIC POTENTIAL

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 22 November 2015

We, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, Peoples' Republic of China, Republic of India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russian Federation and the United States of America, on the occasion of the 10th East Asia Summit (EAS) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 22 November 2015,

Recognizing, that maintaining robust and well-functioning national health systems, in particular, for preventing, detecting, and responding to infectious disease threats with epidemic and pandemic potential across the region, is a prerequisite for sustained shared economic growth, development and prosperity which our region has enjoyed in the recent decades;

Mindful that increasing cross-border travel, rapid urbanization, human-animal-ecosystems interface and enhanced connectivity render public health emergency anywhere a potential emergency everywhere, and that our region's health security constitutes an integral part of the global health security;

Noting with concern the substantial and wide-reaching negative socio-economic impacts of infectious disease outbreaks in the region, including the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, Avian Influenza A (H5N1) in 2005, Influenza Pandemic (H1N1) in 2009, Ebola Virus Disease in 2014, and the recent outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) that highlighted the transboundary nature of infectious diseases, which also work to undermine our collective efforts to deepen regional integration;

Appreciating that the experience gained and lessons learned from past pandemic and epidemic outbreaks have been valuable in enhancing awareness and triggering the establishment and bolstering of various regional frameworks and mechanisms to stem such outbreaks, as well as partnerships with international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) contributing to improvements in overall regional preparedness for communicable and emerging infectious diseases with epidemic and pandemic potential;

Recognizing in this context the 2005 International Health Regulation (IHR) of the WHO as the key global instrument for the protection against the international spread of infectious diseases and the need for all countries to achieve the needed capacity for their full implementation;

Recognizing further the role of various regional mechanisms including the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM), ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers Meeting (APTHMM), ASEAN Plus Three Field Epidemiology Training Network, Emerging Infectious Disease website, ASEAN Risk Communication Research Center (ASEAN RCRC), and the Partnership Laboratories in supporting the development of integrated national and regional outbreak control strategies;

Recalling also the 2009 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health Development (2010-2015), and the ASEAN post-2015 Health Development Agenda which lays out action lines to enhance regional preparedness and capacity through integrated approaches to prevention, surveillance, and timely response to known and emerging infectious diseases, and contribute to charting a comprehensive and action-oriented plan for establishing, maintaining and strengthening national and regional health security strategies and activities designed to prevent, detect and respond to emerging outbreaks, and welcoming other relevant global initiatives for strengthening infectious disease control;

Acknowledging also, the achievements in regional cooperation and collaboration on malaria elimination made by the Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA) in agreeing on the goal of a region free of Malaria by 2030 at the 9th East Asia Summit in 2014 and in endorsing the roadmap presented at this 10th East Asia Summit;

Recognizing that despite many ongoing efforts, much of our region's initiatives to prevent or mitigate the impact of infectious diseases can be better harmonized, including across sectors, and that recent outbreaks heightened the need for more effective and better-coordinated health security cooperation at local, national and regional levels at all stages, including outbreak prevention, surveillance, detection, response, and evaluation and monitoring in line with the IHR (2005);

Reaffirming our commitment to the vision of enhancing regional health security relating to infectious disease threats with epidemic and pandemic potential, and mindful of the value to all of our governments in mobilizing immediate as well as medium and long term investments in our respective public health systems for overall outbreak preparedness as a priority;

Do hereby declare our intent to strengthen our national and regional capacities to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease threats with a focus in the following areas:

1. Promote the effectiveness of surveillance systems in each nation, and enhance timely information sharing through the designated IHR focal points among the member countries, for an early detection of infectious disease threats;
2. Strengthen capacities of national and regional human resources in the field of prevention, surveillance, laboratory capacity, epidemic investigation, and control of infectious disease outbreaks, taking into account the usefulness of sharing lessons learned from previous outbreaks including medical and social practices; and
3. Make efforts to build a safe, secure, resilient, inclusive, accessible, and sustainably financed health system in each nation that is responsive to public health emergency, in line with the relevant targets under the Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and promote regional cooperation to support each other in technical and substantive ways, as appropriate to each country, for enhancing regional health security.

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, this Twenty-second of November in the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen at the 10th East Asia Summit.