

REMARKS

H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General of ASEAN

**Launching Event for the “Enhancing the Detection Capacity for
COVID-19 in ASEAN Member States Project”**

Lobby of Heritage Building, ASEAN Secretariat / 15.00, 16 June 2020

(Note: Remarks by SG will be given after the remarks of Ambassador Lim Sungham and Ambassador Tran Duc Binh. Remarks will just be for 5 minutes. Other Permanent Representatives will be connected virtually.)

H.E. Lim Sungham, ROK Ambassador to ASEAN

H.E. Tran Duc Binh, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to ASEAN

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good afternoon to all of you. Thank you very much Ambassador Lim Sungham and Ambassador Tran Duc Binh for your kind remarks.
2. I thank everyone for your presence in this simple launching or hand-over ceremony for the project on *Enhancing the Detection Capacity for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in ASEAN Member States*.
3. Much appreciation is extended to the Republic of Korea, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN, and the ASEAN Health Sector for collectively leading the process in the realization of this timely and beneficial project.

4. Allow me also to offer my sympathies for the suffering for the loss of lives and caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to the people of the Republic of Korea and to the rest of the ASEAN region.
5. Against the backdrop of ongoing responses in mitigating the pandemic effects to further prevent mobidities and mortalities, the ROK has dramatically reduced the trend of increasing cases of COVID-19, and has sustained low death rates.
6. Similarly, ASEAN Member States are transitioning from lockdown measures to slowly opening up communities and their economic activities based on sustained public health and social measures against the transmission of the disease, and based on reports of 'no local transmission' for a considerable number of weeks.
7. Since the onset of the outbreak of the COVID-19, robust cooperation has been ongoing within ASEAN and with other external partners.
8. The cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK in responding to COVID-19 pandemic has been sustained at national and regional levels through the health and other relevant sectors. Further coordination and collaboration efforts in mitigating the impact of the pandemic particularly to public health, trade and travel at all levels are also currently being enhanced.
9. The President of the ROK during the special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 reaffirmed ROK's strong commitment together with ASEAN and other Dialogue Partners to take collective actions and

coordinate policies in the fight against the rapidly evolving pandemic. Cooperation on public health emergencies including emerging and re-emerging infectious and communicable diseases will also be a major area of collaboration under the new ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action (2021-2025) which will be adopted by our Foreign Ministers' Meeting in August this year.

10. This launching event showcases the results of the strong cooperation of ASEAN with the ROK in addressing the multi-factorial effects of this pandemic to the lives every person in our respective communities.

11. This project, as one of the commitments by the ROK at the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 and facilitated by the Korea Foundation on International Healthcare (KOFIH), is truly recognised to further support the ASEAN Member States with additional donations of PCR machine, personal protective equipment, COVID-19 test kits and corresponding on-site training for the test kits. The donation of these medical supplies and equipment will further strengthen the diagnostic testing capacities and contact tracing of ASEAN Member States.

12. The commitments of our leaders in ASEAN and the Plus Three Countries -- particularly the ROK, are not only realized at the political level but are also very much extended to the welfare and well-being of each of the communities in our region. Yesterday, I had a telephone call with Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha during which Minister Kang reaffirmed the ROK's commitment to strengthening cooperation with ASEAN in addressing the impact of COVID-19. The outcome of this project certainly contributes in ensuring that we stay safe and healthy.

13. This launching event is indeed an opportunity to show to the international community the strength of the ASEAN-ROK cooperation amidst the ongoing collective responses to the pandemic.

Thank you very much.