



## JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SIXTEENTH ASEAN HEALTH MINISTERS MEETING (16<sup>TH</sup> AHMM)

8 AUGUST 2024, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

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The 16<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting was held on 8 August 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

**RECALLING** the ASEAN Leaders' vision of an ASEAN Community outlined in the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Community and the simultaneous endorsement of "*ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*" containing among others, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, at the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

**NOTING** the steady progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint as the current ASEAN Community Vision nears its completion in 2025. While continued efforts are underway towards realising all of the strategic measures contained in the ASCC Blueprint 2025, activities continue to be pursued in connection with the action lines that have been acted upon;

**REAFFIRMING** the commitment to the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" as agreed by leaders at the 70<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly in 2015 which includes an overarching health goal to *ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*;

**RECALLING** the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging health threats which has profoundly affected the lives and livelihoods of people across ASEAN and highlighted the critical importance of resilient health systems;

**INSPIRED** by the significant efforts made by ASEAN and its Member States in responding to the pandemic, including information and knowledge sharing, technical exchange, surveillance and laboratory capacity strengthening, the rapid implementation of public health measures, the development of vaccines, and the provision of essential medical supplies and services;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the progress to pursue *Advancing the Achievements of ASEAN Health Development* committed at the 15<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting and Related Meetings in Bali, Indonesia towards *Building Regional Health System Resilience and Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery; Strengthening Health System for Sustainable Universal Health Coverage and Health Security for Resilient Health Systems; Mutual*

*Recognition of COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates, Optimising the Mobilisation of Essential Health Resources in Responding to Public Health Crisis; and Promoting One Health Approach to Prepare and Respond to Pandemic* through strengthening prevention and preparedness towards public health emergencies; strengthening detection capacity and capability for potential public health emergencies; enhancing the mitigation strategies to address current and future public health emergencies; strengthening access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics (VTD) and other essential medical supplies dedicated to general pandemic preparedness and response; and the urgent need for the operationalisation of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergency and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED);

**COMMENDING** the ASEAN Senior Health Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) and the ASEAN Health Sector for the notable achievements in moving towards the vision of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda Vision for a *Healthy, Caring, Sustainable ASEAN Community* through the Work Programmes of the four ASEAN Health Clusters in promoting healthy lifestyle; responding to all hazards and emerging threats; strengthening health system and access to care; ensuring food safety; and the implementation of relevant ASEAN Health Sector-led declarations and commitments

**UNITED** by the aspiration to continue in building the ASEAN's health system resilience through regional cooperation with whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, maximising the existing and established ASEAN Health sector mechanism for the continued cycle of prevention, detection, response to the current and future health crisis;

**PRESERVED** ASEAN's centrality in advancing partnerships with ASEAN Health sector's Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, and other partners, including with health-related private sector, and in building communication and coordination with global actors and relevant agencies;

**COMMENDING** the contribution by ASEAN Dialogue and Development Partners in the implementation of ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda and COVID-19 related activities, in adherence to *Rules of Procedure on the Engagement of Entities with the ASEAN Health Sector*;

**APPLAUDING** the long-standing cooperation on the Mitigation of Biological Threats (MBT) Programme since 2014;

**AFFIRMING** our commitment in *Transforming ASEAN Health Development Resilience in a New Context* for the ASEAN Health Sector Post-2025 priorities and strategies including focused initiatives relevant to *Strengthening Post Pandemic Health System Capacity to Enhance Regional Resilience and Envisioning and Setting-up Health Priorities for ASEAN Post 2025*, the Meeting discussed and exchanged views on its implementation and agreed on the following:

1. Envision ASEAN Post-2025 health agenda and look forward to its development, based on the lessons and gains from the operationalisation of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda from 2016 to 2025 and development outlook post 2025, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other global health agenda, incorporating valuable lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and the prevention, preparedness and response to other public health threats.
2. Scale-up and sustain the collective regional action to further strengthen ASEAN's post pandemic health systems capacities and enhance regional resilience against pandemic threats through enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination including with external partners, for mutual benefits with a view to engage in information sharing, technical exchanges, capacity building, regional genomic surveillance, research and development, and regional manufacturing of safe, efficacious and life-saving medical countermeasures.
3. Maximise the existing ASEAN Health sector-led mechanism to advance health security in the region by enhancing our initiatives on preparedness, prevention, detection and response capabilities for future health threats and emergencies, among others, the ASEAN Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Network, ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre, ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre (ABVC), the ASEAN+3 Field Epidemiology Training Network, and the ASEAN One Health Network, and ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED).
4. Enhance collective regional initiatives with relevant partners on promoting healthy lifestyles; responding to all hazards and emerging threats; strengthening health system and access to care; ensuring food safety; and health-related declarations and commitments relevant to public health emergency coordination system, ending all forms of malnutrition, combating antimicrobial resistance, mental health promotion, disaster health management, healthy and active ageing, prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, security and self-reliance on vaccines, drugs and diagnostics, ending AIDS by 2030, ASEAN Car Free Day for Culture of Prevention (CoP), reformulation and production of healthier food and beverage options, and One Health initiatives.
5. Look forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity by the 44<sup>th</sup>/45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and support the operationalisation through the ASEAN Biosafety and Biosecurity Network in facilitating the implementation of its plan of action which includes among others coordination and cooperation among ASEAN Member States, partners, and other relevant stakeholders.
6. Foster innovation and the use of digital health technologies to improve health outcomes, through enhance healthcare service delivery, and facilitate cross-border collaboration and information exchange among ASEAN Member States,

such as ABVC, ASEAN Universal Verification Mechanism, and ASEAN Knowledge Management Platform, including public-private partnership to accelerate the adoption and integration of digital health solutions.

7. Accelerate the operationalisation of the ACPHEED through the finalisation and the approval of the Establishment Agreement (EA) within 2024 followed by Host Country Agreements at the earliest time after the signing of the EA; and the inclusion of its activities in the post-2025 ASEAN Health Sector development plans.
8. Task the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development on the following:
  - a. To support the conduct of the assessment of the implementation of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda 2016 – 2025, including outputs, outcomes, and lessons from the operationalisation of the work programmes of the four (4) ASEAN Health Clusters and plan of actions of the health-related declarations and commitments.
  - b. To identify the ASEAN Health Sector Post-2025 priorities and strategies through a timely, collective, transparent, and multi-stakeholder consultation process with relevant partners, aligned with the ASEAN Vision 2045, the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan, and global health agendas to meet ASEAN Member States' needs and priorities.
  - c. To continue, strengthen and explore the cooperation with other ASEAN sectors and ASEAN Dialogue and Development Partners aligned with the ASEAN Health Sector's vision, mission, goals, strategies and health priorities, and adherence to the ASEAN Charter and *Rules of Procedure on Engagement of Entities with the ASEAN Health Sector*.

We look forward to further exchanges of views and collaboration in health development at our next Meeting in Malaysia in 2026.