

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE
FIRST ASEAN – JAPAN HEALTH MINISTERS MEETING
(1st ASEAN – JAPAN HMM)**

11 SEPTEMBER 2026, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

The First ASEAN – Japan Health Ministers Meeting was held on 11 September 2026 in Kuala Lumpur, in conjunction with the 17th ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (17th AHMM).

RECALLING with satisfaction that Japan and ASEAN have developed a long-standing and close partnership for over 50 years since the establishment of dialogue relations in 1973, covering political, economic and socio-cultural areas;

RECOGNISING that, in the ASEAN Health Sector, cooperation has been steadily advanced over the years through collaborative efforts in promoting universal health coverage (UHC), maternal, neonatal and child health, infectious disease control, human resources development, disaster health management and responses to population ageing;

NOTING that Japan has taken a leading role in promoting health cooperation with ASEAN and countries around the world, through the ASEAN and Japan High-Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies, which has been convened since 2003, by hosting the *ASEAN-Japan Health Ministers' Meeting in 2017* with a focus on UHC and population ageing, and by advancing the initiative of the *UHC Knowledge Hub*, including the organization of UHC High-Level Forums, in collaboration with the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), among other initiatives and collaborative activities;

REAFFIRMING that the lessons and experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the importance of resilient and sustainable health systems, and the prevention, preparedness, detection and response to public health emergencies, as well as strengthened regional cooperation;

CONFIRMING the alignment of ASEAN and Japan areas of cooperation with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ASEAN - Japan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) guided by the Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, the *ASEAN Community Vision 2045*, *ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Strategic Plan* and the *ASEAN Strategic Health Agenda 2026-2030*, and reaffirming respect for ASEAN Centrality and Unity, as well as the existing ASEAN-led health sector mechanisms;

WELCOMING the establishment of the ASEAN–Japan Health Dialogue, including the conduct of the ASEAN–Japan Health Ministers' Meeting and the ASEAN–Japan Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD), as a means to further strengthen meaningful cooperation in the health sector;

ACKNOWLEDGING the inaugural ASEAN-Japan Health Ministers' Meeting as the foundation for a long-term ASEAN-Japan mutually beneficial partnership in health, and Japan's continued collaboration through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA); and

AFFIRMING our commitment to the overall theme of the 17th AHMM and Related Meetings, *Healthy ASEAN: Together Towards Equitable, Future-Ready Health Systems* and topic on *Longevity with Dignity: Advancing Healthy Ageing and Sustainable Universal Health Coverage across ASEAN & Japan*. The inaugural Meeting discussed and exchanged views on the following areas of cooperation:

1. Strengthen resilient and sustainable health systems and advance universal health coverage (UHC) to ensure equitable access to quality essential health services for all. In this context, cooperation will be promoted to enhance the institutional financial and operational sustainability of health systems, [including through efficient and sustainable health financing to ensure the sustainability of UHC. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening collaboration between health and finance authorities, including through training programmes for government officials from both sectors, to support evidence-based policymaking, sustainable health financing, and long-term system sustainability.
2. Promote healthy and active ageing by strengthening cooperation, including through enhancing collaboration with the ASEAN Center for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI). In this context, person-centered integrated care, including health promotion and disease prevention, across the life course, as well as coordination between health and long-term care services, will be advanced. Cooperation will also focus on policy development and innovative approaches to ensure that integrated care for older persons is accessible, equitable and implemented in a sustainable and financially viable manner while promoting dignity, independence and quality of life. The sharing of experiences and best practices will be promoted through ASEAN-led initiatives.
3. Promote cooperation in developing health workforce and strengthening governance capacities in the health sector to support resilient, equitable and future-ready health systems. This includes training, fellowship, technical exchanges and knowledge sharing for health professionals, public health personnel, and government officials responsible for health policy and system management.
4. Strengthening national and regional capacities for prevention, preparedness, early detection and response to public health emergencies, including those caused by disasters as well as promoting cooperation on disaster health management, including strengthening the resilience of essential health services, emergency medical response capacities, and sharing knowledge, experience and good practices on disaster health

management, drawing on lessons learned from past public health emergencies and natural disasters, by among others supporting ASEAN Institute for Disaster Health Management (AIDHM), ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), and ASEAN Diagnostics Security and Self-Reliance (ADxSSR).

5. Utilise existing ASEAN-led health cooperation mechanisms, including the ASEAN–Japan SOMHD, to identify priorities, facilitate coordination and information sharing, support implementation and follow-up of cooperation under this Joint Statement. Continuous dialogue and progress review will contribute to the steady advancement of ASEAN–Japan health cooperation, while respecting ASEAN centrality and building upon ASEAN-led cooperation mechanisms.

We look forward to advancing cooperation under this Joint Statement through future ASEAN–Japan Health Dialogues, including the next ASEAN–Japan Health Ministers’ Meeting in Myanmar in 2028, and to further strengthening our mutual partnership through regular dialogue, practical cooperation and mutual learning.
