

**Statement to the United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV and
AIDS
from the ASEAN Health Sector**

**by
H.E Budi G. Sadikin, Minister of Health, Republic of Indonesia,
as Chair of ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting**

8 June 2021

Excellency, the President of the United Nations General Assembly Mr Volkan Bozkir,
Excellency, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr António Guterres,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is my great honour to deliver a statement to the United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS on behalf of ASEAN Health Sector.

Mr President
Excellencies

ASEAN reaffirms our long-standing commitment to curbing the rate of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. This was reiterated through *the 2016 ASEAN Declaration to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030* through reducing new HIV infections and AIDS related deaths, and eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

After five years, progress towards ending AIDS in ASEAN has been uneven. Four countries have been making significant progress in reaching AIDS epidemic control, and six other seeing increases in new infections amongst young people and people living with, at risk of, and affected by HIV. This situation has resulted in growing burdens of illness and death, which exacerbated the existing inequalities and further contributing to the negative socio economic impacts.

ASEAN is aware that inequalities in our societies have contributed to the uneven progress in achieving global 2020 HIV targets in our region. For this reason, we welcome the new “Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026: *End Inequalities. End AIDS.*” The strategy provides ASEAN Member States with the guidance to re-energise national strategies according to national legislation, priorities and evidence about the epidemic in each Member State, and in line with new global targets and minimum standards.

Mr President
Excellencies

We recognise that getting back on track towards ending AIDS by 2030 in ASEAN requires commitment to maximizing equitable and equal access to HIV services and solutions. This means infusing new energy, accepting innovations, addressing co-infections such as tuberculosis and multi-drug resistant, strengthening people-centred services, and community-delivered HIV services such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, community-based screening-and self-testing, as well as strengthening efficiency in service delivery and improving security of commodities.

We further recognise that getting back on track must involve breaking down barriers, which requires better policy and legal strategies design taking into consideration religious and socio-cultural aspects.

We must also improve the resourcing to be efficient and sustainable, integrated into our health systems and social protection, as well as adaptable to humanitarian settings and pandemic responses.

We, the ASEAN Health Sector, must maximise equal and equitable access to HIV services and solutions by ensuring that the communities most affected by HIV are involved and taking leadership roles where possible in our HIV responses using the highest quality data and strategic information.

We understand that a new global pandemic has complicated our work. The intersecting HIV and COVID-19 pandemics have contributed to slowing or reversing HIV response gains in some ASEAN Member States. We must step up to the challenge of ending both as public health threats.

Mr President

Excellencies

As ASEAN Health Sector Chair, I stand before you to reaffirm our commitment through regional health response mechanisms in Ending AIDS by 2030. This is indeed possible with the knowledge and tools, available to us.

I thank you.