

JOINT STATEMENT OF ASEAN PLUS THREE HEALTH MINISTERS SPECIAL MEETING ON EBOLA PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Bangkok, Thailand, 15 December 2014

We, the Health Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan and Republic of Korea met on 15 December 2014, in Bangkok, Thailand, to deliberate on the effective preparedness and response to the threat of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD / Ebola) outbreak.

DEEPLY CONCERNED with the rapid spread of Ebola outbreak in West Africa; currently affecting most parts of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and beyond and by the fact that this Ebola outbreak in West Africa has proven to be the largest in our time;

BEING AWARE of the declaration of the World Health Organization (WHO) in August 2014, following the advice of the Organization's Emergency Committee, that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in view of the virulence of the virus, the intensive community and health facility transmission patterns, and the weak health systems in the currently affected and most at-risk countries;

RECOGNIZING the responsibility of WHO Member States to abide by the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005) under which Ebola has been declared as a PHEIC, and the requirement for strengthened national core capacities in the effective implementation of IHR;

RECALLING Resolution of the United Nations Security Council on 18 September 2014 that expressed deep concern about the detrimental impact of Ebola on the affected countries; and called on member states to provide urgent resources and assistance and also urged member states to implement relevant Temporary Recommendations issued under IHR 2005 regarding the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and lead the organization, coordination and implementation of national preparedness and response activities;

RECOGNIZING that effective implementation of basic public health measures and public health system has played an important role in containing Ebola occurrences;

EQUALLY CONCERNED that the spread of Ebola has advanced far beyond the capacities of infrastructures and resources in public health system and other essential public services of affected countries, while noting the call of WHO for a coordinated international response to stop and reverse the international spread of Ebola;

RECOGNIZING the valuable role of the United Nations (UN) and WHO for the establishment of UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) to coordinate

the efforts of UN actors, international community and international partners to ensure a rapid and coherent response to relieve Ebola crisis;

APPRECIATING the initial Ebola response efforts and mobilization of resources made by the ASEAN Plus Three Member States that includes urgent aid from the region to West Africa not only financial aid to affected countries and UN organizations but also much needed support of Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU), holding centers and human resources inputs followed by strong commitment to capacity building including public health training;

BEING MINDFUL of the risks that all the currently unaffected countries including the ASEAN Plus Three Member States; especially those with extensive interactions in travel, business, industry and labor force with Ebola affected countries; may encounter the situations in which the Ebola virus is introduced from an affected country through international travel;

RECOGNIZING that at present a vaccine for prevention of Ebola infection is not available, nor is an approved therapeutic drug for treatment of Ebola patients; although the development of these medical tools has been rapidly accelerated during the course of outbreak in West Africa, especially with the provision of the WHO Ethical Panel that in the circumstances of current Ebola outbreak, it is considered ethical, if certain conditions are met, to offer drug or vaccine for which safety and efficacy have not been proven in humans as potential treatment or prevention;

BEING AWARE of the high potential in science and technology of the ASEAN Plus Three Member States which has contributed to the development of diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutic drugs for many emerging infectious diseases in the past decades such as HIV/AIDS and avian influenza; including the research and development on therapeutic agents being undertaken in some Member States in response to Ebola threats;

EMPHASISING that strengthening and providing primary health care and healthcare systems linked to implementation of Universal Health Coverage and human resources development in response to public health emergencies are key components to enhance regional capacity from threats posed by Emerging Infectious Diseases including Ebola;

RECOGNIZING the strategic framework and the active implementation under the IHR 2005, Asia-Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED) and the existing ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health Development on Communicable Diseases, Emerging Infectious Diseases and Pandemics including ASEAN Plus Three collaborations on surveillance, laboratory and risk communication;

RECALLING the 12th ASEAN Health Minister Meeting, the 6th ASEAN Plus Three Health Minister Meeting, and the 5th ASEAN China Health Minister Meeting in September 2014 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, where the Health Ministers expressed their serious concern over the on-going threat of emerging infectious diseases; and in particular, the Joint

Statements of the aforementioned Health Minister Meetings that affirmed the pledge to join hands to strengthen regional mechanisms and increase national capacity to prevent such emerging infectious diseases including Ebola;

RECALLING the Chairman's Statement of the 17th ASEAN Plus Three Summit on 13 November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, reaffirming the support of ASEAN Plus Three Heads of States/Governments to strengthen cooperation in addressing the threats of disease outbreaks in the East Asian region, and to focus on health cooperation in areas such as emerging infectious diseases, pandemic preparedness and response, in line with the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health Development (2010-2015);

RECALLING the Joint Statement/Declaration of the 9th East Asia Summit on Regional Response to Outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease adopted on 13 November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar which reaffirmed declarations to strengthen national and regional collaboration and responses to Ebola outbreak through existing bilateral, regional and multilateral channels;

DO HEREBY DECLARE OUR RESOLVE TO:

I. AT NATIONAL LEVEL:

1. Broadening the scope of existing emerging infectious disease preparedness plans at national level to cover potential pandemics and Ebola;
2. Ensuring appropriate assessments of national capacity to respond to emerging infectious disease outbreaks including potential pandemics as well as Ebola, drawing on WHO technical guidance including WHO Ebola Response Roadmap where required;
3. Implementing effective and appropriate health surveillance at points of entry for people whose travel history include Ebola-affected countries;
4. Providing highest level of policy and resource support to the implementation of emerging infectious diseases including Ebola preparedness planning, including multi-sectoral simulation exercises, and establishment of emergency operation centers where appropriate to ensure sufficient capacities for effective coordinated response;
5. Increasing public awareness of emerging infectious diseases including Ebola by providing adequate information to the public and setting up an emergency public information and warning systems whenever it is needed;

II. AT REGIONAL LEVEL among the ASEAN Plus Three Member States:

1. Stepping up collaboration in prevention and control of trans-boundary emerging infectious diseases through sharing and exchanging of information, training and sharing of expertise and good practices to strengthen personnel capacity in essential areas of work, joint outbreak investigation and response where appropriate and upon request, laboratory support for investigation and confirmation of emerging infectious diseases including Ebola, and efficient cross-border referral as well as contact tracing mechanisms and good follow-up of travelers from affected Countries, as needed, among the ASEAN Plus Three Member States and access to stockpiles of essential medical supplies;
2. Strengthening regional mechanism including those under the ASEAN Plus Three framework to ensure proper preparedness and response to emerging infectious diseases including Ebola; with technical support from all relevant UN system entities;
3. Strengthening effective communication channels, among Ministers of Health, and Health Senior Officials and key contact points of the ASEAN Plus Three Member States, and strengthening existing IHR communication mechanism, for early warning and sharing of information essential for efficient national and international response to emerging infectious diseases including Ebola in a timely manner;
4. Promoting the collaboration and provision of financial support and sharing of resources from available sources within the ASEAN Plus Three framework and technical support from international organizations on research and development to increase the availability of intervention tools for prevention, detection, treatment and control of emerging infectious diseases; whereas in an immediate term, focusing the collaborative efforts to accelerate the development of vaccine and therapeutic agents for Ebola;
5. Strengthening health systems with continuous efforts of ASEAN Plus Three to develop human resources for health; to strengthen primary health care; to achieve Universal Health Coverage including through implementation of action plan and its activities in ASEAN Plus Three UHC Network; and to support enhancing capacity of preparedness and response to Emerging Infectious Diseases

III. AT GLOBAL LEVEL:

1. Fully supporting the Ebola affected countries through collaboration with relevant International Partners in intensifying surveillance and response activities and strengthening national capacities in response to the Ebola outbreak;

2. Urgently providing additional resources and assistance, where appropriate, to the affected countries; including financial resources, equipment, human resources, laboratory services, logistics, Ebola treatment units and non-Ebola medical clinics as well as emergency medical evacuation capability for movement of international aid workers potentially exposed to Ebola to locations for appropriate medical care;
3. Calling on all relevant actors to cooperate closely and maximize synergies to respond effectively and immediately to Ebola outbreak including to mobilize and provide essential resources and technical expertise to the Ebola affected countries to accelerate recovery and improvement of public health systems and to prevent future outbreak;

TASKING Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) in coordination with ASEAN Working Group on Pandemic and Response and in close collaboration with ASEAN Plus Three Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) Cooperation to keep updating and regularly review the progress on this matter and to work in close consultation with the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers with the support of WHO with a view to following up on the implementation of this statement;

We hereby declare effective implementations of the aforementioned measures for peace, security and well-being of our people.

Adopted at Bangkok, Thailand this Fifteen of December in the Year Two Thousand and Fourteen at the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Special Meeting on Ebola Preparedness and Response.
