

**Joint Statement by ASEAN
76th World Health Assembly**

**Agenda Item 3 – General Discussion
22 May 2023**

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of ASEAN Member States.
2. As representatives of a region that is home to over 650 million people, we recognize the urgency and significance of collaborating closely in our efforts to safeguard the health and well-being of our populations, in line with this year's WHA theme "WHA at 75, Saving Lives, driving health for all".
3. First, we acknowledge the importance of international cooperation and solidarity in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. ASEAN member states have demonstrated resilience and unity in responding to the crisis, guided by the principles of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.
4. We remain committed to strengthening the regional health architecture beyond COVID-19. For this purpose, ASEAN have expanded the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to respond to other public health emergencies and emerging diseases;
5. We also endeavour to operationalize the ASEAN Center for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), the ASEAN Bio Diaspora Virtual Centre (ABVC) and the ASEAN Institute of Disaster Health Management (AIDHM).
6. We also highlight the need to strengthen genome sequencing and vaccines development capacities, and support efforts to accelerate these at the national and regional level. In response to the First Call for Proposals by the Pandemic Fund, all ten ASEAN Member States have submitted a proposal to strengthen regional genomic surveillance.
7. A discussion on the possible establishment of an ASEAN Manufacturing and R&D hub for Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics is also currently underway.
8. Moving forward, as we note the increased interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, we strive to better prepare to save lives through the One Health approach. The ASEAN Declaration on One Health Initiative was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders just last week.
9. The initiative includes the establishment of an ASEAN One Health Joint Plan of Action and a One Health Network to strengthen ASEAN's collective efforts in this area that reflects the region's needs and priorities.

10. ASEAN also look forward to the concrete and successful outcomes of the SDG Summit and the High-Level Meeting on health-related issues at the UN later this year.
11. ASEAN member states are committed to ensuring that equitable and effective outcomes are achieved through the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a convention, agreement or other international instrument under the Constitution of the World Health Organization to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations.

Mr President,

12. We reiterate that ASEAN's resilience is a key priority for the region in a highly-evolving regional and global environment.
13. We have therefore underscored the necessity for ASEAN to be forward-looking, to anticipate and address emerging challenges.
14. In this regard, we are determined to make Southeast Asia the centre of regional economic growth and an engine of global growth through robust cooperation, including in the health sector.

I thank you

Word count: 457 words