

## **JOINT STATEMENT OF ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Special Video Conference on the Threat of MERS-CoV in the Region**

We, the Health Ministers/Heads of Delegations of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, China, Japan and Republic of Korea conducted a Special Video Conference on 27 July 2015, to discuss ways forward in enhancing preparedness and response to Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the Region.

RECALLING the Joint Statement of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Meeting In September 2014 in Hanoi, Viet Nam;

REITERATING the agreed upon measures stated in the outcome documents of the 9<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit on Regional Response to Outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease adopted on November 2014, and the Special ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Meeting on Ebola in December 2014 to enhance preparedness, surveillance and response to threatening Emerging Infectious Diseases among ASEAN Plus Three Member States;

CONCERNED with the incidence of MERS-CoV reported in 26 countries globally, including the importation of the infection into five ASEAN Plus Three Member States;

APPRECIATING the commitment of the governments of the Republic of Korea, China, Thailand and the Philippines in their efforts to contain the outbreak of MERS-CoV in May and June of 2015, along with Malaysia in 2014;

COMMENDING the preparedness efforts of other ASEAN Plus Three Member States in facing the threat of MERS-CoV, including surveillance and capacity building;

BEING AWARE of the continuing threat of MERS-CoV in the region as a result of international travel, including but not limited to Hajj Pilgrimage and Umrah, and the significant impact of any potential MERS-CoV outbreaks in the region to public health, society and the economy;

We, the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers/Heads of Delegations, agree to enhance the preparedness and response to MERS-CoV by:

1. Strengthening in-country disease surveillance and leveraging on existing regional risk assessment mechanisms on MERS-CoV with the technical support of international organizations including WHO;

2. Ensuring relevant and timely information sharing with other member states whenever there are new cases of MERS in any member state for accurate risk assessment. This internal communication will not replace the IHR mechanism;

3. Where appropriate, coordinating cross border contact tracing and outbreak investigations through joint multi-country collaboration, including ASEAN Plus Three Field Epidemiology Training Network (FETN) platforms;

4. Taking appropriate measures to manage risks by having access to diagnostic laboratories, adopting adequate infection prevention and control measures and risk communication for MERS-CoV;

5. Supporting the sharing of best practices of MERS-CoV management and relevant research opportunities or outcomes, and thus welcome the initiative of Republic of Korea to convene an international meeting to share experiences of MERS-CoV;

We, hereby pledge our commitments to effectively implement the aforementioned measures for peace, security and well-being of our people.