

The 15th ASEAN-Japan High Level Officials Meeting
on Caring Societies (Closing Remark)

Distinguished delegates from the ASEAN member states and the Secretariat

Distinguished representatives and experts from ILO, JICA, as well as academic and research institutions,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to make closing remarks on behalf of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan.

First of all, I would like to thank all moderators, presenters and panelists for their valuable contributions to share their expertise and experiences with one another. These rich exchanges throughout this meeting have certainly deepened our knowledge and mutual understanding among ASEAN and Japan on this very important topic for our countries.

From our discussions, I have three key observations.

First is the critical role of national government. It is very important to establish a strong nationwide, multi-sectoral strategy or framework to support both children and parents at all states from pregnancy, child birth to child rearing. Your role as policy makers at each ministry is therefore crucial.

Second, we must design a good community-based, multi-sectoral partnership to deliver healthcare and childcare services effectively and efficiently. Various policy measures were suggested to enhance cooperation and coordination at the community level, including the use of mother and child health handbook.

Third, we must continue to develop healthcare and childcare workforce and improve their quality of care both at the national and local levels.

Let me congratulate each of you on these fruitful outcomes and rich discussions. I sincerely hope that you will make best use of the knowledge and expertise shared at this three-day meeting to promote better policies for our future generations in your country.

Finally, on behalf of the Ministry, I would like to express our firm, continued commitment to promoting multi-sectoral discussions in health, labour and welfare sectors which are of high importance to the ASEAN+3 region, including through this High Level Officials' Meeting as well as various meetings held under ASEAN+3 framework.

Let me conclude my remarks by wishing you a safe journey to your country. I hope we see each other in the near future, in Japan or in your country.

Thank you very much for your attention.