

The 17th ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies, December 4 - 6, 2019 Recommendations

We, the participants representing the health, social welfare and labour sectors of the ASEAN Plus Three Countries, along with international, regional and related organisations and partners, at the 17th ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies (hereafter referred to as the Meeting) held in Aichi, Japan on December 4 - 6, 2019, under the theme, “Healthy and active aging towards an inclusive society”;

Appreciating the continued initiative taken by the Government of Japan to hold these annual Meetings since 2003, and acknowledging that this 17th Meeting has served as an effective platform to share knowledge and exchange views about roles of stakeholders in health, social welfare and labour sectors to promote an inclusive society towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Preamble

Recognizing that ageing is progressing worldwide, in particular in the ASEAN Member States where the population is projected to age rapidly in the near future, and that maintaining the health of the elderly people, addressing their welfare and social security needs, and taking preventive measures are matters requiring an urgent response of each ASEAN member states;

Recognizing that Universal Health Coverage is fundamental in providing the essential services and good accessibility for older persons;

Recognizing that active and healthy ageing is a prerequisite to ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth, and the increase in need for health care and long-term care, which require a larger and better trained workforce and care management, and the importance of supporting an ageing population to live in optimal health with dignity, independence and autonomy in their communities;

Noting various efforts by Fujita Health University, Comprehensive Health Science Center of Aichi Health Promotion Public Interest Foundation, and National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology to advance health system to support the elderly people living healthy and active through close collaboration with communities;

Noting the concepts of the Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) and the “Global Age-Friendly Cities Guideline” advocated by the WHO in 2006;

Recognizing the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) located in Thailand which serves as a knowledge centre, supports evidence-informed policies, strategies and guideline, implements capacity development programme, conducts research and development and innovation, and supports the monitoring of progress of active ageing;

Considering that the current situation of aging in the health, labour and social welfare sector, the promotion of measures related to aging, and the cultural and social backgrounds vary among ASEAN member states and differ with Japan, therefore the current issues that they are faced with may not be the same.

Concluded the following recommendations:

1. Promote health by implementing policy measures including raising awareness about healthy lifestyle and health literacy, preventive long-term care, and promoting occupational safety and health, over the life course;
2. Recognize that dementia is one of our common challenges which has significant impacts on health, quality of life, economy and the entire society, and promote age-friendly and dementia-inclusive environments by raising awareness to enable better understanding of dementia and prevent and overcome stigma;
3. Incorporate elderly focused policies into labour and occupational safety policies, in recognition of the importance of promoting social participation, skill utilization, experience and capacities of the elderly people as well as securing income, considering that there is a vast informal sector;
4. Identify appropriate role and resource sharing between the public and private sectors and ensure their commitment, and promote to create comprehensive system in supporting healthy and active life for the elderly people and people with certain health conditions in their communities;

5. Recognize that roles of national and local governments, universities, research institutions, and communities, and importance of empowerment of local leaders and volunteers to effectively collaborate towards integrated community based care;
6. Recognize the need for multi-sectoral policies and policy cohesion to foster active and healthy ageing for people as well as the role that healthy ageing plays in achieving social, labour market and economic goals, and work together with other relevant ministries, sectors, and stakeholders to create age-friendly environments, and sustainable health and long-term care;
7. Enhance cooperation and coordination across health, welfare, labour and other related sectors in order to ensure seamless support for the elderly people and their families;
8. Strengthen collection and sharing of disaggregated data on health and active aging by responsible authorities at the national and local levels to monitor and evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of policies and programmes that promote welfare and quality of life for the elderly people;
9. Promote utilization of health data, and the application of digital and other existing and future value-based innovative technologies in implementation and evaluation of active and healthy ageing policies;
10. Enhance sharing of knowledge, experiences, good practices, and technological and social innovations across and within countries in the areas of public health, social welfare and labour for healthy and active ageing by facilitating cross-sectoral and cross-organisational collaboration among the ASEAN Member States and Plus Three Countries, WHO, ILO, JICA and other related international and regional organisations and development partners.

Further concluded that:

- i. The proceedings and outcomes of this 17th Meeting should be reported to the respective Ministers and other Senior Officials in each country for appropriate actions to implement the above recommendations in accordance with their respective national process, national regulations, and socio-economic contexts; and

- ii. Japan, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, should report the proceedings and outcomes of this meeting to the ASEAN+3 Health Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings on Health Development (AHMM+3, SOMHD+3), ASEAN+3 Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD+3, SOMSWD+3) and ASEAN+3 Labour Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings (ALMM+3, SLOM+3).