

## **The 18th ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting**

### **on Caring Societies**

### **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 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies held on the web on October 30, 2020, under the theme of “Promoting Inclusive Society for Children’s Future Focusing on support for children with developmental disorders including Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families”;

Appreciating the continued initiative taken by the Government of Japan to hold these annual Meetings since 2003, and acknowledging that this 18<sup>th</sup> 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 toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### Preamble:

Noting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the “ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” approved at the 33<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2018;

Recognizing the importance of providing support to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disorders and their families to provide them with a sense of security in living their own lives as full members of the community, as well as the need to strengthen support and collaborate in the health, social welfare and labour sectors for this purpose;

Noting activities by Support Centres for Persons with Developmental Disorders, Local Vocational Centres for Persons with Disabilities, and the private sector in communities to provide individualized support for persons with disabilities and their families at different life stages, to provide information and training

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opportunities to supporters, to disseminate information to communities to enhance their understanding of developmental disorders, and to collaborate with people from various generations and situations on a daily basis;

Noting that the effects of the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has led to a need for ingenuity in supporting children with developmental disorders to adapt to new lifestyles;

Noting that in the current situation and in promoting measures for persons with developmental disorders in the health, social welfare, and labour sectors, ASEAN member states are diverse, and their cultural and social backgrounds are various and differ with Japan, and therefore, the current issues they face may not be the same.

Concluded the following recommendations:

1. Promote the development of integrated community-based support systems by enhancing collaboration and cooperation across health, social welfare, labour, education and other related sectors to ensure seamless support for persons with developmental disorders according to life stages, from infancy to school age and into adulthood as members of society;
2. Promote the development of systems to be able to respond to diverse situations in communities by utilizing existing and limited social resources in collaboration with the private sector and NGOs, in light of the importance of increasing the number of service centres in areas near persons who need support;
3. Promote efforts to realize “inclusive communities” that can co-create and enhance communities, lifestyles, and provide motivation in life, rather than separating all local residents into two groups of those who provide support and those who receive it;
4. Promote the creation of a symbiotic, inclusive environment for persons with developmental disorders by raising awareness to achieve a better understanding of developmental disorders, and preventing and overcoming prejudices;

5. Promote actions to improve the abilities of local health professionals to respond to developmental disorders and strengthen early responses through collaboration with health and welfare services, to ensure that children with disabilities who are faced with developmental concerns and problems receive the health and welfare services they need as early as possible;
6. Recognize the importance of support for livelihoods and work as a foundation for persons with developmental disorders to lead independent lives in their communities, clarify the challenges and strengths of individuals with developmental disorders, and strengthen support for livelihoods and work, while also promoting collaboration across multiple sectors so they can achieve social and economic independence;
7. Recognize that careful support for families raising children with disabilities accordingly to each stage of their child's development will have a positive impact on the children themselves, and work to provide support to families to enhance their "ability to support their children to grow up";
8. Strengthen the collection and sharing of data through surveys and research to monitor and evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of relevant policies and programmes for persons with developmental disorders;
9. Enhance sharing of knowledge, experiences, good practices, and technological and social innovations within and among countries in the areas of public health, social welfare and labour for children with developmental disorders and their families 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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

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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 Official Meetings (ALMM+3/SLOM+3).