

# **The 22nd ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting**

## **on Caring Societies**

**November 25 – 27, 2024**

### **Recommendations**

We, the participants representing the health, social welfare and labour sectors of ASEAN Member States and Japan, witnessed by observer countries including the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the Republic of Korea, along with international, regional and related organizations and partners, engaged in meaningful exchange of knowledge, information and experience at the 22nd ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies held in Kawasaki City, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, from November 25 to 27, 2024, under the theme of “A Virtuous Cycle of Achieving UHC (universal health coverage) and “Promoting a Healthy Society” ”;

#### **Preamble:**

Appreciating the continued initiative taken by the Government of Japan to hold this annual meeting since 2003, and acknowledging that this 22nd meeting has served as an effective platform to share knowledge, insights and experiences and exchange views on the roles of stakeholders in the health, social welfare and labour sectors, to promote an inclusive society toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Reaffirming the steady efforts that have been shared by respective countries in this meeting, including the institutionalization towards achieving and sustaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC);

Recognizing the importance of achieving UHC at an early stage in order to make social protection approaches sustainable, particularly in Asian countries that are experiencing rapidly ageing populations; the challenges that threaten peoples' security and health such as infectious disease outbreaks; the growing urgency to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the Asian region; and the effects of climate change, and natural disasters;

Acknowledging that UHC and its implementation are closely linked to a wide range of policy agenda and interventions such as strengthening health systems, securing healthy and productive workforce, realizing inclusive social protection, advancing social inclusion of diverse people including their employment, reducing poverty, and promoting gender equality, which require cross-sectoral and complementary efforts that include health, labour and welfare sectors; and,

Reaffirming the various efforts and collaboration of public and private sectors in Kanagawa Prefecture, that are contributing to UHC such as the KING SKYFRONT and Welfare Complex FukuFuku, Social Welfare Corporation GREEN, and AOBA MAISON;

**Have concluded the following recommendations on:**

**1. Acknowledging the mutually reinforcing linkage between the creation of a healthy society and the achieving of UHC, and endeavouring to accelerate efforts in both directions**

We reacknowledge the importance of achieving UHC at an early stage and in alignment with to the circumstances of each country in view of rapidly aging and aged society; and recognize mutually reinforcing linkage between creating a healthy society and promoting UHC, and will endeavour to accelerate efforts in both directions.

**2. Strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration among relevant parties to enable vulnerable people to participate in society**

In order to sustain UHC, we will further strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration among relevant parties to not only provide health and medical services but also to address social issues that make people vulnerable and to enable them to participate in society according to their willingness and capabilities, so that no vulnerable people are left behind.

**3. Investing in developing and securing human resources related to UHC**

We will continue to promote the development of human resources involved in the provision of health and medical services, local social welfare and other social services, as well as policy making and implementation, and system management to ensure that each country can achieve UHC and sustain it in

the future in response to changes in the social and economic environments.

#### **4. Building social security that utilizes various community resources**

We aim to build a whole-of-society approach in local communities for the promotion of UHC through collaboration among various parties, including local residents and the local private sector, so that the elderly and the disabled can receive a variety of life support services, including welfare services in addition to medical and nursing care, in the communities they are familiar with.

#### **5. Providing services effectively and efficiently with the utilization of digital technology**

By utilizing digital technology, we will make efforts to accumulate and assess data related to health and medical care, enhance individual health literacy and improve and streamline access to health and medical care services, to move towards addressing related regional disparities.

#### **6. Encouraging review and the pursuit of the “better” after the achievement of UHC**

We acknowledge the need to respectively and periodically review the progress of UHC in each country and whether it is optimal for people after it is achieved, given the evolving circumstances, such as demography and social conditions, and the need to pursue the better UHC as necessary while balancing the quality, cost, and access to medical and health care services, and we therefore will continue to collaborate and share knowledge, insights and experiences on UHC through meaningful platforms such as the ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies and the ASEAN Plus Three UHC Network under the ASEAN Health Sector.

#### **We further concluded that:**

- i. The proceedings and outcomes of this 22nd ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies will be reported to respective ministers or other senior officials concerned in each country for consideration and appropriate actions to implement the recommendations above in

accordance with their respective procedures, policies, 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 Plus Three Health Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings on Health Development (AHMM Plus Three/SOMHD Plus Three), the ASEAN Plus Three Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD Plus Three/SOMSWD Plus Three), and the ASEAN Plus Three Labour Ministers and Senior Labour Officials Meetings (ALMM Plus Three/SLOM Plus Three).