

**Joint Statement of
the Sixth Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM)
November 24, 2013
Seoul, Korea**

We, the Korean, Chinese, and Japanese Health Ministers met in Seoul, Korea on November 24, 2013 and discussed issues of common concern to our three countries in health and medical fields. The discussion covered pandemic influenza and emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases, universal health coverage, population aging, prevention and control of non-communicable disease, health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I. Pandemic Influenza and Emerging/re-emerging Infectious Diseases

Joint response to pandemic influenza is the area where tripartite health cooperation started. We signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on a Joint Response against Pandemic Influenza in 2007 and the Joint Action Plan on Joint Preparedness and Response against Pandemic Influenza in 2008. On the basis of these documents, we have carried out various cooperation activities including table-top exercises, seminars and workshops. We acknowledged the usefulness of rapid information sharing through the focal points when the pandemic influenza A (H1N1) emerged in 2009.

Recent emerging of human cases with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus in China and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus in the Middle East region have posed a challenge to global health. Korea and Japan applauded China for its effective response to the human cases of influenza A (H7N9)s and timely communication about epidemiological and clinical information through the CJK cooperation. We all acknowledged and reaffirmed the importance of the close cooperation based on the mechanism through this experience. Therefore we decided to continue and strengthen the cooperation on

pandemic potential events. We also decided to expand the scope of the cooperation to other emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases where joint efforts are required in order to minimize damage caused by outbreaks. To closely work together in the field of preparedness and response against pandemic influenza and emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases of common concern, we renewed the Memorandum of Cooperation and the Joint Action Plan in this THMM.

II. Universal Health Coverage

We acknowledged universal health coverage as one of the most powerful unifying concept in health. We have experienced diverse paths and challenges in the process of developing our own policies ultimately aimed at sustainable universal health coverage. Endorsing Resolution 58.33 of the World Health Assembly on sustainable health financing, universal coverage, and social health insurance, and Resolution 64.9 of the World Health Assembly on sustainable health financing structures and universal coverage, and Resolution 67/81 of UN General Assembly on global health and foreign policy, we reaffirmed the need to share the experience of health system development and learn from each other among the three countries for more efficient health system.

We reached a conclusion that universal health coverage will be another important area for the trilateral cooperation. We will have an opportunity to discuss the achievement and challenges in the process of realizing Universal Health Coverage of the three countries and look for strategies to deal with the challenge of extension, service delivery, financial protection and sustainability.

Being of the same view that the concept of UHC covers a series of different issues, we acknowledged that it is critical to create opportunities for regular exchanges and cooperation on key elements of universal health coverage between governments and academia.

III. Other Issues

1. Population Aging

Population aging is the common demographic changes facing our three countries that could have a huge impact on the future healthcare environment. We shared the view that there is a need to review the current health care system and governance to ensure more healthy and active aging of growing elderly population.

We believe that the three countries can work together for smart response to aging population. We reaffirmed our commitment to implementing what had been discussed in the fourth Korea-China-Japan Forum on Aging held in Shanghai, China in July this year, which produced productive discussion on aging society and health services. We decided to work together to promote exchanges between governments and academia where cooperation is likely to have the greatest impact considering racial and cultural similarities between the three countries.

2. Non-Communicable Disease

Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, principally cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, is our common concern. We acknowledge the importance and need to exchange and cooperate in the field of non-communicable disease prevention and control. We fully endorse the Political Declaration made at the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in New York in September 2011, Comprehensive Global Monitoring Framework and Targets for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, and Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020 adopted at the 66th World Health Assembly in May 2013.

We decided to commit ourselves to actively engaging with all relevant sectors of governments in the follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.

Recognizing the importance of shifting the focus of healthcare paradigm to prevention and controlling main risk factors including tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, physical inactivity and unhealthy diet, we decided to share policy efforts made for the purpose. In relation to tobacco control where international efforts are made with the WHO at the center, we support commitment expressed in the fifth Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control held in Seoul in 2012. In particular, we will uphold the Seoul Declaration and the spirit of the Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products for the sake of the health protection of our people.

Considering policy directions and expert opinion of the three countries regarding the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, we also decided to produce possible collaborative topics where the three countries have common interest and find as having the greatest impact and to strengthen efforts for academic exchanges and joint research.

3. Health-related MDGs

In the fourth THMM, we had decided to work together in our efforts to implement the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health launched at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the Sixty-fifth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Recognizing that improving health of women and children in developing countries is one of the core elements in achieving health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we decided in this THMM to continue our cooperation in this field by 2015, the target year of MDGs.

Investment made since 2000 to achieve health-related MDGs has saved countless lives across the world and played a critical role in improving health and welfare in the poorest countries. In light of the notion, health should be given a priority in the next generation of global development goals and we will strengthen experience sharing and other cooperative activities in the fields of health-related global development goals. In particular, we shared the view that key elements of universal health coverage should be included in the next global development goals. Today we took this opportunity to highlight the need to include those health-related elements in the post-2015 global development goals.

IV. Next Meeting

1. We reaffirmed the shared recognition that the THMM is to be held on a regular basis and that all activities will be conducted on the basis of equality, reciprocity, and mutual benefit, and should be in harmony with the activities and goals of other international health bodies, where applicable, and do not affect relations currently established between institutions or individuals of each country.

2. The next meeting will be held in China in 2014.