

The 15th ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies, October 31- November 2, 2017 Recommendations

We, the participants representing the health, social welfare and labour sectors of the ASEAN plus Three countries, along with international, regional and related organizations and partners, at the 15th ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies (hereafter referred to as the Meeting) held in Fukuoka, Japan on October 31-November 2, 2017, under the theme, “Healthy Development of Children for Future Generations,”

Appreciating the continued initiative taken by the Government of Japan to hold these annual Meetings since 2003, and acknowledging that this 15th Meeting serves as an effective platform to share knowledge and exchange views about the roles of stakeholders in public health, social welfare and labour sectors to promote healthy development of children,

Preamble

Reaffirming that the promotion of healthy development of children through a multi-sectoral policy approach in the areas of health, social welfare, education and employment is an important foundation to realise a sustainable, equitable society for our future generations;

Stressing the importance of robust nationwide, multi-sectoral strategies or frameworks of action to promote healthy development of children at all stages from pregnancy, child birth to child rearing, involving all relevant sectors of central and local governments in charge of maternal and child health, child welfare, childcare, women empowerment, employment , and education;

Reaffirming the need for community-based, multi-sectoral cooperation and partnerships among all relevant stakeholders, such as local communities, welfare and medical institutions, schools, and private sectors including NGOs and volunteers to promote healthy development of children in a holistic manner;

Emphasising the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Universal Health Coverage (UHC), as a key driver to promote maternal and child health, leaving no one behind, especially the poor or those with special needs;

Have agreed the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen and promote capacity development of health and childcare workforce both at the national and community levels, which can lead to improved quality and health outcomes;
2. Reinforce policy measures such as maternal and infant health check-ups, nutrition support, health promotion, education, and vaccination, with special focus on disadvantaged people or areas, in order to strengthen infrastructure for secure and safe childbirth;
3. Enhance cooperation and coordination across different health and welfare facilities and healthcare workers at all stages of pregnancy, childbirth and child rearing through such measures as the effective use of maternal and child health (MCH) handbook, in order to ensure seamless support or continuum of care with a people-centred approach;
4. Strengthen community-based cooperation and network of all relevant stakeholders in maternal and child health, child welfare and education sectors to provide necessary support at an early stage to those children and their families at risk, such as the poor and abused;
5. Promote a safe and secure environment for children and parents which enables them to play, bond and build resilient closer relationship for healthy development of children.
6. Introduce and/or reinforce policy measures, in partnership with local communities, academia, NGOs and the private sector, to promote affordable and good quality childcare services for workers, with special attention to the needs of disadvantaged children and families such as migrants, minority groups and single parents, to ensure their equal access to decent work and the continuation of income, as well as to enable workers to raise families in a

safe and secure environment;

7. Promote policy measures to protect and empower women with children or in pregnancy, including through social and legal protection and targeted support, to realise their full potential in society, recognizing that their participation in workforce is key to overall gender equality, while recognizing that pregnancy and maternity are an especially vulnerable time for working women and their families, and also that fathers have important roles to play in child-rearing;
8. Enhance sharing of knowledge, experiences, good practices and social innovations across countries in the areas of public health, social welfare and labour for children and parents by facilitating cross-sectoral and cross-organizational collaboration among the ASEAN Member States and plus three countries, WHO, ILO, JICA, and any other related international and regional organizations and partners

The participants of the Meeting have further agreed that:

- (i) The proceedings and outcomes of this 15th Meeting should be reported to the respective Ministers and other Senior Officials in each country;
- (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).