

**Joint Statement of
the Fifteenth Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM)
December 16th, 2022 (Video Conference)**

We, the Health Ministers of the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China and Japan, on December 16th, 2022, held the Fifteenth Tripartite Health Ministers' Meeting (THMM) via video conference.

We acknowledged our all efforts to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, which is one of the most common public health challenges of the three countries, and reaffirmed our commitment to cooperate closely in prevention, preparedness and response to infectious diseases with pandemic or high consequence potential of common concern and to share relevant information, knowledge and experiences at the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Tripartite Health Ministers' Meetings via video conference. The meeting agenda included Cooperation in Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPR), Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Healthy Aging.

1. Improving Global Health Security; Cooperation in Pandemic PPR

Considering the geographical proximity of the three countries and the frequency of international travel and transportation, we reaffirmed the importance of regional and global cooperation and global health security for strengthened pandemic PPR against infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Based on the "Joint Action Plan among the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea and the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China on Preparedness and

Response against Infectious Diseases with Pandemic or High Consequence Potential of Common Concern” (hereinafter referred to as “Joint Action Plan”), the three countries have been working together not only to effectively protect public health in each country but also to contribute to improving global health security. Likewise, we acknowledged the importance of continuous cooperation to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic together, and united efforts and actions to reduce risks and the impact of future pandemic and epidemic threats.

We also reaffirmed the importance of swift mobilization of essential healthcare resources during pandemic in order to bolster health security in the Asian Pacific region. We showed our determination to cooperate to improve equitable access to pandemic countermeasures such as vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, to collaborate with global efforts made through international organizations and relevant funds, and to conduct training and protection of healthcare workforce.

Additionally, we reaffirmed our cooperation to strengthen global surveillance of pandemics. We underscore the importance of collaborative discussions and measures to promote a One Health approach, which is a good tool to prevent and curb zoonotic pathogens and their pandemics having potential for global public health emergencies. With regards to a One Health approach, we already recognized antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as a health threat. Accordingly, we propose that the three countries discuss national and regional strategies integrated with a One Health approach to ensure the promotion of health of the humans, animals and the environment.

2. Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

The achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is fundamental to sustainable development and is the core principle linking all health related issues,

enabling global healthcare system to preemptively respond to various environmental changes, ensuring access to basic health care for all and mitigating the impact from emergencies. It is imperative to demonstrate and raise awareness about the significant value of investing in UHC as it will contribute enormously to PPR to possible future health emergencies. As we went through the COVID-19 pandemic, we reaffirmed the importance of resilient healthcare system and concurred in the need of cooperation in strengthening UHC. We, three countries, will continue sharing of our experiences and expertise and strengthen cooperation so as to better prepare for various challenges in achieving UHC.

With increasing social demands for healthcare services due to demographic change and healthcare technology development, we reaffirmed the importance of use of digital health technology in pursuit of national health promotion. We suggest utilization of digital health technology not only for healthcare service development but also for improving access to healthcare services tailored to personal needs. Building on such experiences to be accumulated, we will continuously strive to UHC globally using digital health. We will share experiences and cooperate with each other so as to contribute to improving the health of patients while enhancing access to health services and dealing with social issues such as aging society by implementing digital health policies.

Based on the knowledge and expertise required for UHC achievement, the three countries will work together and closely cooperate with the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) and WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WRPO). We will spare no effort to establish a resilient healthcare system in the region by conducting workforce training and sharing best practices and models. The recent global public health emergency has demonstrated the growing importance of comprehensive healthcare services, which also bear in mind the vulnerable population. Recognizing

this, we will cooperate to realize sustainable UHC in the three countries and Asia-Pacific countries including ASEAN Member States.

3. Healthy Aging

We will promote cooperation in achieving healthy aging, active aging society and the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) so as to meet the needs of the three countries.

WHO defines healthy aging as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age”. We acknowledged that achieving healthy aging requires preventive approach and the establishment of an integrated health and long-term care system. We emphasize the importance of service provision in consideration of personal health and social care needs, and will work together to build integrated health and social care models including primary (preventive) care, professional treatment and community care.

Aging in Place (AIP) is one of the important policy directions to deal with in rapidly aging societies to realize healthy aging. We acknowledged that living in their own homes with a familiar immediate environment enables older persons to fully demonstrate independence and maintain functional ability. We will cooperate to bolster community-centered health and long-term care infrastructure, and to establish social care systems to provide complicated care and meet the needs of older persons.

Also, in preparation of a super-aged society, we promise to work together for the prevention and response of NCDs such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory diseases. While focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic response, the international community has been less interested and invested in addressing NCDs. We, three countries, will continue to cooperate in prevention and control of NCDs, sharing

policies and experiences.

4. Next Meeting

We reaffirmed the common recognition that the Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting will be held regularly with the cooperation of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) and that we will conduct relevant activities based on equality, reciprocity, and mutual benefit.

The next Tripartite Health Ministers' Meeting will be held in China in 2023.