

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE ASEAN HEALTH MINISTERS' SPECIAL VIDEO
CONFERENCE ON THE THREAT OF ZIKA VIRUS IN THE REGION**

We, the Health Ministers / Heads of Delegations of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam conducted a Special Video Conference on the Threat of Zika Virus in the Region on 19 September 2016, in order to discuss ways forward in enhancing our collective response to this threat.

RECALLING the 10th East Asia Summit Statement on Enhancing Regional Health Security relating to Infectious Diseases with Epidemic and Pandemic Potential agreed on 22 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

REITERATING the agreed upon measures that called for enhancing preparedness, surveillance and response to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases as stated in the outcome documents of the Special ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Meeting on Ebola in Bangkok, Thailand in December 2014, and the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Special VDO Conference on the Threat of MERS in the Region in July 2015;

CONCERNED with the spread of Zika Virus Disease and its associated complications including microcephaly and other neurological disorders, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that this constituted in a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and now has been reported in 72 countries globally so far, including in some ASEAN Member States;

APPRECIATING the commitment of affected ASEAN Member States in their efforts to manage the spread of the disease, and in ongoing research initiatives to increase knowledge and understanding of the disease;

COMMENDING the preparedness activities of all ASEAN Member States in facing the threat of Zika Virus Disease, including capacity building in the fields of surveillance, laboratory investigation, vector control, public risk communication;

ACKNOWLEDGING the progress made at the global level by WHO and other partners to strengthen collective responses to public health emergencies;

BEING AWARE of continuing threat of Zika Virus Disease and other emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases in the region, augmented by increasing international travels, climate and environmental changes, and the significant impact of any potential outbreaks in the region to health, society and the economy;

We, the ASEAN Health Ministers, agree to enhance our preparedness and response to Zika virus disease and other emerging and re-emerging diseases in the region by:

1. Strengthening in-country disease surveillance and leveraging on existing regional risk assessment mechanisms on Zika Virus Disease with the technical support of international organizations including WHO;
2. Leveraging on the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR, 2005) and other existing mechanisms to ensure relevant and timely information sharing with other member states for accurate risk assessment;
3. Enhancing the effectiveness of regional surveillance and response on Zika Virus Disease and other emerging and re-emerging diseases through the existing regional initiative mechanisms including ASEAN-Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Network, and ASEAN Plus Three Field Epidemiology Training Network (ASEAN+3 FETN);
4. Taking appropriate measures to manage risks by intensifying vector control measures, ensuring access to diagnostic testing for Zika virus within our countries, including strengthening national laboratory network and communicating such risks appropriately;
5. Conducting research and sharing of new knowledge and best practices with regard to Zika Virus Disease, through relevant ASEAN-based cooperative mechanisms including ASEAN+3 FETN, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education – Tropical Medicine and Public Health Network (SEAMEO-TROPMED) and also, other existing platforms including the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA).

We, hereby pledge our commitment to effective implementation of the aforementioned strategies and measures to the best of our capacities for the health security and well-being of our people.

19 September 2016
