



**TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MULTIDRUG-RESISTANT TB CARE,  
TREATMENT AND CONTROL RESPONSE IN THE ASEAN REGION  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
WORLD TB DAY CELEBRATION 2020  
24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**

World TB Day is observed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March annually. Tuberculosis (TB) is the world's deadliest infectious killer. Every day, almost 30,000 people fall ill due to TB and over 4,000 people lose their lives to TB. Global efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 58 million lives since TB is a preventable and curable disease. TB poses a lot of threats, and continues to challenge the public health systems in ASEAN Member States.

The ASEAN Member States represent a diverse and dynamic region, owing to the differences in demographic, epidemiological and socio-economic factors. However, gaps continue to exist between and within countries in the region, where six countries are on the WHO high burden TB list and three countries have a high TB/HIV burden. Various health determinants in different countries also showed a significant burden of TB.

The high TB burden countries reporting cases of more than 100 per 100,000 population are Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

In ASEAN, 1.9 million people fell ill with TB. This statistic was relatively stable. Almost 643,000 of these were never officially diagnosed or treated. About 180,000 people died of tuberculosis in 2018. The region had over 67,000 drug-resistant TB cases in the area, but only 25,425 people were formally diagnosed and treated. This totaled about USD99 billion in expenses between 2000 and 2015 in the ASEAN region.

Connections with regional and global cooperation opportunities through existing ASEAN Member States were established to further strengthen TB control and preventive programs. As an ASEAN Community, ASEAN Member States agree that collaboration will enable each individual Member state to protect and improve their citizens' health more effectively, by adopting complementary and synergistic management of each national health system's efforts and resources. Hence, experience sharing via these good practices and lessons learned through various platforms between the ASEAN Member States plays a vital role in ending TB.

With such a huge challenge facing us, governments alone cannot maintain successful initiatives, prevention and promotion programs to address the problem. Given the concerted response to today's and tomorrow's health challenges, World TB Day is a time to recognize TB prevention and control accomplishments and renew our pledge to end TB. World TB Day is a day to educate the public about TB's global impact. It's time to strengthen TB education and awareness among communities and health care providers. Responsibility for achieving these noble goals must therefore be expressed not only by all those interested in health care and science, but also by civil society and affected communities. Protect yourself and your loved ones — Get tested and Access Preventive Treatment. To end TB by 2035, ASEAN Member States will continue working together to tackle this disease by extending treatment, improving prevention, and intensifying research.

*Note:*

*This article was published by Ministry of Health Malaysia, as the Lead Country for Regional Tuberculosis Prevention and Control in ASEAN Health Cluster 2 “Responding to All Hazards and Emerging Threats”*

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