

## **ASEAN Secretary General Statement of Concern with the Plight of Cambodia and Thailand in Addressing Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease**

Secretary General of ASEAN Dr. Surin Pitsuwan officially expressed that ASEAN Secretariat is still closely monitoring the health events in Cambodia and Thailand that have been related to the Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD).

The Secretary General has expressed concern regarding the social and health implications to the families in these countries whose children had either suffered or died due to the disease. However, despite this concern he is confident that the health situation will be under control with proper technical intervention from the senior officials in health; coordination and collaboration of technical agencies like WHO; and community participation in ensuring preventive measures of lowering the risk of infection – such as good hygiene practices.

The Health Cooperation in ASEAN has included HFMD as one of its priority concerns discussed at the level of the Senior Officials on Health Development and also with our Senior Officials on Health from China.

For properly disseminating the appropriate information on HFMD, ASEAN Secretariat through the Health and Communicable Diseases Division has provided website linkages in the ASEAN Website under the ASCC Health Link. These website links come from Cambodia ([www.cdcmoh.gov.kh](http://www.cdcmoh.gov.kh)) and the ASEAN+3 Field Epidemiology Training Network (FETN) under the purview of the ASEAN Expert Group on Communicable Diseases ([www.aseanplus3fetn.net](http://www.aseanplus3fetn.net)). Further information from Thailand, Cambodia through their official website links together with WHO links will also be posted in the FETN website.

ASEAN +3 FETN will be one of the mechanisms for sharing information about the situation on HFMD in Member States with WHO. There are plans of organizing a VDO conference among Members States regarding this matter anytime this coming month.

Dr. Surin reiterates his concern but is confident and ready to coordinate with all stakeholders involved.