

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE NINTH ASEAN CHINA HEALTH MINISTERS MEETING (9TH AC HMM)

9 AUGUST 2024, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

The 9th ASEAN-China Health Ministers Meeting (ACHMM) was held on 9 August 2024 in Vientiane, the Lao People's Democratic Republic;

RECOGNISING that ASEAN and China established cooperation in the health sector since 2003, during the Special Meeting of ASEAN-China Leaders on SARS and have a longstanding health cooperation since its first ASEAN-China Health Ministers' Meeting in 2006;

RECALLING the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which have underscored the critical importance of robust and resilient health systems; whereby the ASEAN-China health cooperation was enhanced from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 through information sharing and technical exchanges with ASEAN Member States;

ACKNOWLEDGING the shared responsibility of ASEAN Member States and China to work collaboratively to strengthen health systems, ensure equitable access to healthcare, foster innovations, and promote the well-being of our populations;

EMPHASIZING the need for sustained investments in health systems strengthening, including infrastructure, human resources, technology, and financing, to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and ensure that no one is left behind;

RECOGNIZING the mutual benefits of sharing best practices, expertise, and resources in areas such as disease preparedness, prevention, detection and response, health promotion, and health care delivery;

HIGHLIGHTING the ASEAN China Health sector cooperation through the past and future ASEAN – China Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Health Cooperation with specific areas of cooperation based on the mutual interest of ASEAN Member States and China.

UNITED in *Transforming ASEAN Health Development Resilience in a New Context*;

AFFIRMING our commitments in *Strengthening Health System and Access to Care beyond 2025*, the Meeting discussed and exchanged views and agreed as follows:

1. Enhance our collective capacities to prevent, prepare, detect, and respond to public health emergencies and emerging infectious diseases which also include strengthening early warning systems, sharing relevant information and updates; improving disease surveillance, strengthening laboratory system and networks, and ensuring effective and coordinated response mechanisms.
2. Reaffirm our commitment to achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and prioritise strategies and programs that ensure all people have access to essential health services.
3. Strengthen regional cooperation aiming to eliminate health inequities and ensure that all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, geographic location, or other factors, have access to quality healthcare services. This includes targeted interventions to improve health outcomes of vulnerable and underserved populations.
4. Maximise digital health technologies in improving healthcare delivery and outcomes, and invest in and promote the adoption of digital health solutions and innovations to enhance healthcare access and quality.
5. Consider the unique advantage of traditional medicine and strengthen its role in national health system, as applicable, through enhancing capacity building in traditional medicine by cooperation in traditional medicine personnel training, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) medical assistance and pharmaceutical development, and development and utilization of evidence-based medicinal plant resources.
6. Support the ASEAN Health sector post-2025 priorities including health systems resilience in response to current and future health challenges. This includes upgrading healthcare infrastructure, scaling up capacities and capabilities of the health workforce and strengthening health financing mechanisms to ensure a sustainable and responsive health system.
7. Move towards the finalisation and subsequent signing of the ASEAN – China Memorandum of Understanding on Health Cooperation with the agreed areas of cooperation through the established ASEAN Health Sector mechanism.
8. Enhance the coordination and cooperation with relevant development partners and stakeholders to ensure complementarities and synergies aligned with the health priorities and implementation mechanism of the ASEAN Health Sector.

We look forward to further exchanges of views and collaboration in health development at our next Meeting in Malaysia in 2026.