

Joint Statement of
The 16th Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM)
among the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea
3 December, 2023

We, the Health Ministers of the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, hereinafter referred to as "the three sides" gathered at the 16th Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting in Beijing, the People's Republic of China, on December 3 2023.

REAFIRMING our trilateral partnership grounded on geographical proximity, shared culture, shared vision, and shared responsibility for creating a safe, healthy and prosperous future for the region and international community;

Based on the solid cooperative foundation built through the Tripartite Health Cooperation mechanism as well as regional health bodies such as the APEC Health Working Group and ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers Meeting;

We made the following discussion:

Securing Public Health in the Asian-Pacific through Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPR)

RECALLING with satisfaction that the Tripartite Joint Action Plan on Preparedness and Response against Infectious Diseases with Pandemic or High Consequence Potential of Common Concern (hereinafter referred to as "Joint Action Plan") has been successfully implemented with significant achievements in protecting public health in each country but also in contributing to improving global public health security, enhancing information sharing, and consolidating THMM as a well-functioning tripartite cooperation mechanism for addressing regional and global health challenges as well as for achieving sustainable development;

WELCOMING the UN High-level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response on September 2023. NOTING the progress made in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body for an international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, the working group on amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005), to strengthen national health emergency preparedness, response and resilience;

NOTING with appreciation the various activities carried out by the three sides under the common framework of the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED III) by the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions;

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of continuing and further strengthening THMM cooperation in the mechanisms to promote sustainable development for health in the region, hereby reached as the following:

1. Commit to further strengthening the cooperation in emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases prevention, preparedness and response, including timely information sharing of epidemiological and clinical information based on the Joint Action Plan;
2. Emphasize the need to invest in developing, training, recruiting and retaining a skilled health workforce, as fundamental to strong and resilient health systems to prevent, prepare and respond to pandemics, and improve working conditions and management of the health workforce to ensure their safety;
3. Welcome the upcoming 17th Korea-Japan-China Forum and Joint symposium for Communicable Disease Control and Prevention held in Seoul on 4-5 December 2023, as well as the 1st Japan-China-Korea Clinical Professionals Joint Symposium newly launched and held virtually on 28 November 2023;
4. Seek to expand collaboration among Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, and the institute for health security of Japan (to be established after 2025, and named tentatively) in order to continue and further strengthen cooperation among technical experts.

Building Resilient and People-Centred Health Systems to Achieve Universal Health Coverage

WELCOMING the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage on “Universal Health Coverage: expanding our ambition for health and well-being in a post-COVID world” approved in September 2023, and reaffirm our commitment to accelerate the implementation of the 2019 political declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage, which reaffirms that health is a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;

EMPHASISING the fundamental role of primary health care in achieving universal health coverage and that people-centred integrated primary health care brings people into first contact with the health system and is the most inclusive, effective and efficient approach to enhance people’s physical and mental health, as well as social well-being;

ACKNOWLEDGING the role of digital health tools in promoting public health information and health literacy, as well as empowering patients by strengthening patient involvement in clinical decision-making with a focus on health professional-patient communication and by enabling them to access their electronic health data and facilitating continuity of care;

NOTING progress towards achieving universal health coverage requires expansion of equitable access to health services within and among countries;

Hereby reached as the following:

1. Strengthen the resilience of health systems by ensuring that primary health care, referral systems, and essential public health functions, including health promotion, prevention, early detection and control of diseases, are among the core components of prevention of and preparedness for health emergencies, in order to respond to such emergencies while maintaining the provision of and access to essential health services, as well as mental health support, or to quickly reinstate them after disruption and commit to strengthening public health systems.
2. Promote policies to build and strengthen an interoperable and effective digital health system, taking into account the WHO Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025, to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage, including the safe, accessible, equitable and affordable use of digital health technologies and information and communication technologies, including for people living in underserved, rural and remote areas or in areas difficult to access.
3. Encourage further sharing of best practices, experiences and lessons learnt through this tripartite cooperative mechanism.

Promoting Healthy Ageing

ACKNOWLEDGING the consensus, commitment, and accomplishments made in exchanges and cooperation regarding healthy ageing, and consensus made in the Joint Statements adopted by previous Tripartite Health Ministers' Meetings.

REAFFIRMING our efforts to implement global and regional commitments on healthy ageing, including active and healthy ageing related in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), and the Regional Action Plan on Healthy Ageing for the Western Pacific.

WELCOMING the efforts to enhance cooperation in this area among three sides in the 11th Population Policy Forum held in July, 2023.

EMPHASIZING that China, Japan and Korea would actively respond to population ageing by implementing culture-tailored national strategies and taking concrete steps to strengthen regional cooperation.

Hereby reached as the following:

1. Further strengthen policy dialogue and exchange each other's experiences on promoting healthy ageing, including cooperative research on issues related to healthy ageing, and

cooperating with other countries and regions across the world through, for example, providing best practices.

2. Scale up efforts to identify and respond to the growing needs of the rapidly ageing population, especially the need for people-centred and integrated health services for older persons via a seamless network of families, communities and health care institutions, including promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care as well as effective approaches for mental health, reaffirming the importance of extending universal health coverage to all older persons.

The next Tripartite Health Ministers' Meeting will be held in Japan in 2024.
