



STATEMENT

**on behalf of Member States of
the Association of Southeast Asian Nations**

**at the Plenary of the seventy-sixth session
of the General Assembly**

**on Agenda Item 129
Global health and foreign policy**

29 March 2022

by

**H.E. Mr. Supark Prongthura,
Ambassador and Charge d'Affairs of Thailand to the United Nations**

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

2. Health has been continuously gaining political attention in New York over the years, but in particular over the past two years, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has put health high on the agenda of the United Nations. This is why ASEAN views that **the annual resolution presented by the Foreign Policy and Global Health (FPGH) Initiative under the theme “Elevating pandemic prevention, preparedness and response to the highest level of political leadership”** is very timely and relevant.

3. ASEAN remains deeply concerned with the continued human cost and suffering as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods brought about by COVID-19, which has severely affected the region.

4. For our region to emerge more resilient and stronger, ASEAN will seek to fully and effectively implement ASEAN COVID-19 initiatives, such as the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, and in particular **the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan** which serves as the region’s consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic. ASEAN is determined to work together through the 5 ACRF broad strategies around health, human security, economic integration, digital transformation, and sustainability.

5. Under the broad strategy on health, ASEAN sees the need to **enhance vaccine production and distribution in the region** to put an immediate end to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through enhanced collaboration and sharing of experience with partners in research, development, production, and distribution of vaccines, providing equitable access to medicines for COVID-19, making COVID-19 vaccines available and affordable to all as global public goods, as well as preparing for other future public health emergencies. This would also help strengthen **vaccine security and self-reliance** at the regional level in the longer term, which is a priority strategy for health in ASEAN, as affirmed in the ASEAN Leaders’ Declaration on ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance.

6. Furthermore, we believe that **building resilient and strong health systems and achieving universal health coverage** is the foundation of pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. We also place importance on enhancing the region's capacity to prepare for, prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies and emerging diseases, and in this regard, look forward to the operationalization of the **ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED)**, which would serve as a centre of excellence and regional resource hub.

7. We must also **build resilience** to emerging infectious diseases and future health threats, including anti-microbial resistance which ASEAN recognizes as a risk to environment and human health. ASEAN therefore welcomes the decision in the resolution to hold a **high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance in 2024**.

Mr. President,

8. In conclusion, ASEAN would like to reaffirm our commitment to continue working with the international community, in particular with the World Health Organization and the United Nations, towards achieving healthy lives and well-being for all, in particular by ending the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging stronger and more resilient from its recovery, being more prepared for future health emergencies and other shocks.

9. I thank you.

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