Joint Statement of the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (14 April 2020)

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, held the Special ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) via videoconference on 14 April 2020. The Summit was chaired by H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of Viet Nam, in his capacity as the Chair of ASEAN.

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the unprecedented and severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to the well-being, livelihood and safety of our peoples and its adverse impact on the socio-economic development of our respective countries and the world at large.

EXPRESSING deepest condolences and sympathies for the loss of life and suffering caused by the pandemic.

RECOGNISING the exponential spread and severity of COVID-19, which the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

EMPHASIZING our gratitude and support to all medical professionals, healthcare workers and other frontline personnel who have been working with all their hearts and minds to fight the pandemic, saving people's lives.

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of people's participation in preventing and controlling COVID-19.

WELCOMING steps taken by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to support countries in need by using and enhancing their instruments in response to their members' urgent needs.

SUPPORTING the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for all nations to respond decisively, innovatively and collectively to suppress the spread of the virus and address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

NOTING the commitment expressed by the G20 Leaders in their Extraordinary Summit statement of 26 March 2020 to present a united front against the common threat of COVID-19.

STRESSING the important role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global campaign to control and contain the spread of COVID-19, recognising the importance of implementing the health measures under the

International Health Regulations (2005) and underscoring the necessity for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in addressing public health challenges such as COVID-19;

COGNISANT of the important role of APT cooperation for peace, security and prosperity in the East Asian region. Emphasising the significance of health cooperation and its existing mechanisms in addressing public health challenges, including our successful partnership in fighting the SARS pandemic in 2003.

COMMENDING the timely and active efforts by the APT Health cooperation platforms and among the Plus Three partners in jointly responding to COVID-19 from its early outbreak.

NOTING with satisfaction the encouraging outcomes of the Special Video Conference of the APT Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development on 3 February 2020, the China-Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Special Video Conference on COVID-19 on 20 March 2020; the Special Video Conference of the APT Health Ministers in enhancing cooperation on COVID-19 on 7 April 2020.

RECOGNISING the decisions to re-organize a number of major events including the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

WELCOMING the ASEAN Chairman's Statement of 14 February 2020 and the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 of 14 April 2020 that demonstrated ASEAN's highest-level commitment on collective response to the outbreak of COVID-19, in the spirit of a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN. Supporting ASEAN's multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, whole-of-community approach to address the multi-faceted challenges posed by COVID-19.

REAFFIRMING our shared commitment to strengthen solidarity, enhance cooperation and mutual support among the APT countries to control and contain the spread of the pandemic, addressing the adverse impact of the pandemic on our societies and economies.

To this aim, we hereby resolve to:

1. **STRENGTHEN** the early warning system in the region for pandemics and other epidemic diseases as well as regular, timely, and transparent exchange of real-time information on the situation on the ground and measures taken by each country in combating COVID-19; sharing of experience and best practices, extending mutual technical support in

the prevention, containment and control of transmission as well as clinical treatment of infected cases. Support strong, collective and orchestrated response for control and treatment to harness synergies for effective curbing of COVID-19 measures that are relevant and appropriate to the severity and further evolution of the disease in Member States and within the region, as guided by: national risk assessments; the periodic reports on Risk Assessment on the International Dissemination of COVID-19 in the ASEAN Region; and, subsequent video conferences of the ASEAN Plus Three SOMHD on policy and strategic matters, and the ASEAN EOC Network on technical concerns.

2. **ENHANCE** national and regional capacities to prepare for and respond to pandemics, including the protection of healthcare workers and other frontline personnel, and the provision of adequate medicines and medical supplies, especially diagnostic tools, personal protective equipment, medical equipment, by adhering to the objectives of efficacy, safety and accessibility.
3. **CONSIDER** setting up an APT reserve of essential medical supplies that enables rapid response to emergency needs. Encourage tapping on existing regional emergency reserve facilities including the warehouses managed by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), among others, further consider the utilisation of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR).
4. **SUPPORT** ongoing regional collective efforts by the APT health cooperation sector and by ASEAN to enhance capacities to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats, leveraging on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 and through existing mechanisms, including, among others, the ASEAN Emergency Operations Center Network for public health emergencies (ASEAN EOC Network) and the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre.
5. **STRENGTHEN** scientific cooperation in epidemiological research, including through the APT Field Epidemiology Training Network (FETN), coordination, including with the private sector, towards rapid, research, development, manufacturing and distribution of diagnostics anti-viral medicines and vaccines, adhering to the objectives of efficiency, safety, equity accessibility and affordability as well as actively share and leverage on digital technologies and innovation to promote a science-based response to combat COVID-19.

6. **ENCOURAGE** mutual support and assistance between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries in the development of human resources and capacity for the public health sector, including support for upgrading of health facilities for infection prevention and control, training of public health workers and provision of scholarships for students from ASEAN Member States to study in educational and training institutions and related fields of sciences of the Plus Three countries and strengthen the national health systems.
7. **ENDEAVOUR** to ensure adequate financing to contain the pandemic and protect our peoples, including through the proposed establishment of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund for public health emergencies which would be reallocated from existing ASEAN+1 and APT cooperation funds, with possible additional support from ASEAN's external partners.
8. **ENHANCE** cooperation to provide appropriate support and assistance to nationals of the APT countries, especially the most vulnerable, who stay, work, and study in each other's countries, working towards the dignity, health, well-being, safety and fair and effective treatment of those affected by COVID-19 as well as facilitating the movement of people as appropriate.
9. **INTENSIFY** efforts to promote effective public communication, involving multiple forms of media, including timely updates of relevant government policies, public health and safety information, of clarifications on misinformation and fake news, and efforts to reduce stigmatisation and discrimination.
10. **REAFFIRM** commitments to keep markets open for trade and investment, and enhance cooperation among ASEAN Plus Three countries with a view to ensuring food security, such as the utilisation of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), and strengthening the resiliency and sustainability of regional supply chains, especially for essential goods such as food, commodities, medicines and medical supplies through smooth and continued operation of the logistics networks, while ensuring that measures deemed necessary for public health emergency response are targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary and that they do not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption to regional supply chains, and are consistent with WTO rules.
11. **ENCOURAGE** to maintain necessary interconnectedness in the region

by facilitating to the extent possible the essential movement of people, including business travels, while ensuring the safeguarding of public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic as well as to minimize socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19.

12. **REAFFIRM** our commitments to strengthen joint efforts toward post-pandemic recovery, stimulate economic development and financial resilience, restore growth, connectivity and tourism, maintain market stability, and prevent potential risks of economic recession.

13. **IMPLEMENT** appropriate and necessary measures to boost market confidence to improve stability and resilience of the regional economy in a preemptive and concerted manner, including through economic stimulus, and to assist people and businesses suffering from the impact of COVID-19, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and vulnerable groups. Leverage technologies and digital trade to allow businesses, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to maintain operations.

14. **STRENGTHEN** efforts to stabilise the manufacturing and supply of essential goods and services, including vital medical supplies, critical agricultural products, maintain necessary flow of goods and services and sustain supply chain connectivity within the region and beyond by making the supply chain more resilient, sustainable and less vulnerable to shocks in order to support economic development, reaffirming our commitment described in the Joint Leader's Statement on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership released in 2019

15. **REMAIN** vigilant to the potential risks to regional financial stability, foster closer regional financial cooperation and policy coordination and support the ASEAN Plus Three Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) in monitoring the economic and financial development in the region and providing timely risk assessment and policy advice. Reaffirm our commitment to the readiness of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM), the Regional Financial Arrangement (RFA), as a reliable layer of the Global Financial Safety Net.

16. **COMMIT** to work closely with the WHO, relevant organisations and the international community as well as encourage public-private partnership (PPP) and a whole-of-society approach in the global fight against the pandemic, while tackling the profound social and economic consequences of COVID-19, protecting people's well-being and sustaining growth.

17. **STAY** united on high alert and be ready to take any further action that may be required.
18. **TASK** the APT Foreign Ministers to serve as the main coordinating body, in close collaboration with the relevant sectoral bodies within the APT framework, to monitor the implementation of the commitments and agreements underscored in this Statement.

Adopted on this 14th day of April, 2020.