

Joint Statement of
The 17th Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM)
Among Japan, the People’s Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea
15 December 2024

We, the Health Ministers of Japan, the People’s Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea, held the 17th Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM) in Tokyo, Japan on December 15th, 2024.

We reaffirmed our trilateral partnership grounded in geographical proximity, shared public health concerns, culture, lifestyle, and responsibility for creating a safe, healthy, and prosperous future for the region and the international community.

We had the following discussions:

Enhancing Public Health Security

Regarding the global health architecture, we will continue to support the World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarters and the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, which play essential roles in global health governance during global health emergencies, including pandemics. We welcome the amendments to the International Health Regulations and remain committed to constructive participation in discussions for an international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR).

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the most immense and critical international health issues that poses long-term concerns to global health security as a "silent pandemic" and requires immediate global actions. We recognize the importance of addressing AMR and welcome the outcome of the UN High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance in September 2024.

We acknowledge the importance of “the Joint Statement on Future Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response”, which was successfully

released in May 2024, at the Ninth Trilateral Summit. Based on the consensus of this Summit, we successfully updated “the Memorandum of Cooperation on Prevention, Preparedness and Response against Infectious Disease with Pandemic and High Consequence Potential of Common Concern” and “the Joint Action Plan on Prevention, Preparedness and Response against Infectious Disease with Pandemic and High Consequence Potential of Common Concern” at this THMM. Drawing upon these documents, we will accelerate PPR through cooperation among our three countries.

We acknowledge the importance of promoting the implementation of international joint clinical trials in Asia and the harmonization of pharmaceutical regulations and medical device regulations in Asian countries to support their rapid practical application of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. In this way, we will accelerate healthcare innovation in the region and contribute to improving patient access to treatment.

We reaffirm the need to invest in developing, training, recruiting, and retaining a skilled health workforce, which is fundamental to strong and resilient health systems to prevent, prepare for, and respond to pandemics, and to improve working conditions.

We will seek to expand collaboration among the national public health institutes for disease control in our three countries, such as the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, and the Japan Institute for Health Security, which is to be established in April 2025, in order to continue and further strengthen technical cooperation to jointly tackle future global health emergencies.

Promoting Healthy Ageing

We will further strengthen policy dialogue and exchange experiences on promoting preventive approaches and maintaining sustainable healthcare systems with population ageing through platforms such as the Seminar on Policy on Declining and Ageing Population.

We emphasize the importance of cooperation in areas of common interest among our three countries, including creating age-friendly environments, promoting social participation, providing integrated care and securing access to high-quality health and long-term care for the elderly.

We will share knowledge and skills through human resource exchanges to respond to various needs of the elderly, such as care for cognitive decline, limited mobility, declined sensory function, oral diseases, and malnutrition.

We will jointly explore ways to reduce the burden on healthcare providers and caregivers and to ensure the quality of care by utilizing technologies such as care robots and ICT that will contribute to our efforts regarding other agenda items as well.

Given the similarities in healthcare challenges, family structures, cultures, and lifestyles among our three countries, we acknowledge the importance of encouraging cooperative research on issues related to healthy ageing. We will encourage scientific research institutions to conduct joint research projects to establish evidence on efficient preventive approaches and effective care for the elderly.

Building More Resilient, Equitable, and Sustainable Health Systems to Achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

We acknowledge that the strengthening of health care systems through the achievement of universal health coverage (UHC) leads to better preparedness for various health challenges caused by epidemics and pandemic of infectious diseases, increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and population ageing. We will exchange experiences on maintaining high-quality UHC in response to population ageing and share our lessons learnt with our Asian neighbors who will face similar challenges in the near future.

As highlighted at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on UHC in September 2023, capacity building for health workers and

national and local government authorities is a common challenge for global health systems to achieve UHC. Recognizing our role as a leading advocate for the global agenda on UHC, we will make more efforts to support the enhancement of knowledge for national and local government authorities in low- and middle-income countries and the lifelong capacity building for health workers through various initiatives, such as the UHC Knowledge Hub to be established in 2025 in Japan and the WHO Global Bio Workforce Training Hub in Korea.

We acknowledge that digital transformation is essential to achieve and promote more equitable, efficient, and resilient healthcare systems. We will cooperate in sharing knowledge on digital technologies to effectively utilize medical information, including healthcare demands, access to healthcare, and health spending.

The next Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting will be held in the Republic of Korea in 2025.