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Fact Sheet

Health in a globalised world: chronology of initiatives taken in ASEAN

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Health in a globalised world: chronology of initiatives taken in ASEAN

From 1980 onwards: Regular meetings of health ministers in Southeast Asia, providing for cooperation on disease control and environmental health. Health is seen as an integral part of socio-economic development.

- CDC (US Center for Disease Control and Prevention) field epidemiology training programme with the Thai Ministry of Public Health initiates to train the next generation of public health officials in Thailand and the region.

2001: The WHO Southeast Asia office proposes a regional strategy advocating the idea that interventions in the environmental sector can help to improve health and that a holistic approach to health, environment and development issues is needed.

2004: The birth of the One Health concept, when the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) hosting a symposium in Manhattan entitled "One World, One Health: Building Interdisciplinary Bridges to Health in a Globalized World". The aim of the symposium is to focus on potential and existing disease transmission between humans, domestic animals, and wildlife. This takes place in the context of recent epidemics of zoonotic diseases such as West Nile virus, Ebola, monkey pox, mad cow disease, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and avian influenza, and others.

- First meeting of high-level representatives on environment and health involving East and Southeast Asian countries takes place in Manila, Philippines (WHO, UNEP, ADB).

2005: Regional Charter on Environment and Health, or "Bangkok Charter" affirms the need for binding legislation and the establishment of other legal instruments. This initiative, later called the East and Southeast Asia Regional Forum, will become the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment.

The Bangkok Charter will be decisive in promoting health-related activities in the region, providing a lasting framework for the countries of Southeast Asia to take intersectoral action to respond to the risks associated with the spread of infectious diseases.

2008: Meeting in Manila of the health ministers of the ASEAN Member States and those of China, South Korea and Japan (ASEAN+3) aims to further improve the health situation in the larger region. Participants commit to adopting the One Health approach to the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases.

(ASEAN+3, 2008, Joint Statement of the Third ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers Meeting, Manila, 10 October 2008. <https://asean.org/joint-statement-of-the-third-asean-plus-three-health-ministers-meeting-manila>)

2010: Having noted a lack of regional coordination in Southeast Asia and within ASEAN in the context of avian influenza due to the lack of management capacity and the economic and political disparity between Member States, the European Commission supports a programme to strengthen regional coordination on highly pathogenic infectious diseases with the ASEAN Secretariat. This programme, known as HPED (Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases), initially aims for a global response to avian flu, but has since been enhanced by the One Health approach.

(European Union, 2010, Outcome and Impact Assessment of the Global Response to the Avian Influenza Crisis 2005-2010, Publications Office of the European Union)

2011: The Southeast Asian One Health Universities Network (SEAOHUN) is a regional organisation, headquartered in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which now brings together more than 95 universities in eight Southeast Asian countries - Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam - and six universities in Taiwan, an associate member. It aims to build the capacity of the One Health workforce and train the next generation of One Health professionals to equip them with skills and a systems approach to problem-solving that considers all aspects of the human-animal-ecosystem nexus.

2020: The ASEAN Heads of State and Government announce the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) in Bangkok. This is the result of a feasibility study funded by the Japanese government through the ASEAN-Japan Integration Fund (JAIF). The project contributes to the implementation of the 2025 Objectives of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

It aims to enable ASEAN to improve its capacity to respond to all types of health-related risks (Health Cluster) and emerging threats, as well as its capacity to prevent and respond to public health emergencies, and to promote a resilient health system in response to emerging infectious diseases (zoonotic diseases, neglected diseases, communicable diseases).

(ASEAN Health Cluster 2 (2021-2025): ASEAN Health Cluster 2 on Responding to all Hazards and emerging threats Work Programme 2021-2025

<https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/health/priority-areas-of-cooperation>)

August 2022: opening ceremony in Bangkok.

Reference

The One Health approach: South-East Asia as a prime location for its implementation, by Claire Lajaunie et Serge Morand (in L'Asie du Sud-Est en 2023, IRASEC, Bangkok)