

Joint Statement
of the Third Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM)

Tokyo, November 23rd, 2009

We, the Chinese, Japanese and Korean Health Ministers met in Tokyo, Japan on the 23rd of November 2009 and discussed issues of common concern to our three countries in the health and medical fields. The discussion included pandemic influenza, clinical research, food safety, and emergency preparedness and responses.

I. Pandemic Influenza

Our three countries have continued to work closely together and strengthen our cooperation regarding joint responses to pandemic influenza based on the Joint Statement of the first Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (THMM), the Memorandum of Cooperation regarding Joint Response against Pandemic Influenza among the Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, and the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs of the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred to as "the participants") on the 8th of April, 2007, and the Joint Action Plan on Joint Preparedness and Response against Pandemic Influenza signed at the second THMM.

We have strived to develop prevention and response measures against pandemic influenza and have expanded the scope of cooperation to include other Asian countries by holding international workshops. These were held in Fukuoka in March of 2009 and in Manila in September of 2009 and were supported by the WHO's Regional Office for the Western Pacific. Also, the participants have closely shared through their focal points epidemiological information on cases of H1N1 influenza infection, relevant laboratory information, and information on public health measures, which has proved to be useful.

In light of the outbreak of the H1N1 virus, we reaffirmed the importance of continued cooperation among the participants as a means of improving Asia's responses against pandemics. In addition to the above-mentioned cooperation, continuous endeavors for sharing information—including information on public health responses to pandemic influenza in each country and relevant laboratory findings such as anti-viral resistance—should be taken in cooperation with the participants' CDCs, the WHO's Regional Office for the Western Pacific, ASEAN, and other Asia-Pacific countries. We also reaffirmed the importance of our commitment to strive to protect public health and minimize any damage caused by pandemic influenza in Asia through mutual cooperation and exchanges.

II. Other Issues

1. Clinical Research

We welcomed the progress of cooperation in the area of clinical research, including that made through the holding of meetings of the heads of pharmaceutical-related bureaus of the participants. This progress was made after the first THMM, which acknowledged the importance of cooperation among the three countries in the area of clinical research including clinical trials. We reaffirmed the importance of tripartite cooperation in clinical research.

2. Emergency Preparedness and Responses including Disaster Management

Based on the joint statement issued after the first THMM, which designated emergency preparedness and responses, including disaster management, as an area for future cooperation, an international symposium on disaster medical management was held in Tokyo in March 2009 and was attended by persons involved in this field in China, Korea, and Japan. An international Conference on Health Response to Natural Disasters was held in Chengdu China in April 2009. Because the sharing information on each country's disaster medical response systems and lessons learned from major earthquakes was highly valued at these symposia, we reaffirmed the importance of the field of emergency preparedness and responses as an area of cooperation among the participants and re-agreed that future cooperation shall be considered.

3. Food Safety

Based on the agreement made during the second THMM that the issue of food safety would be brought up at the next THMM, we affirmed the importance of tripartite exchanges and cooperation in the area of food safety. We signed a memorandum for strengthening tripartite exchanges and cooperation in the area of food safety, including the matter of notifying information in the case a food safety issue becomes apparent in any of the each countries.

III. Next Meeting

1. We reaffirmed the common understanding that the Ministers Meeting is to be held on a regular basis and that all activities will be conducted on a basis of equality, reciprocity, and mutual benefit and do not affect relations currently established between institutions or individuals of each country and are expected to be in harmony with the activities and goals of other international health bodies where applicable.

2. The next meeting will be held in Korea in 2010.