



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
AND  
THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

**T**he Association of Southeast Asian Nations, hereafter referred to as ASEAN, and the World Health Organization, hereafter referred to as WHO, represented by its Regional Offices for South East Asia and for the Western Pacific, hereafter referred to as SEARO and WPRO, respectively, in recognition of the importance of health and nutrition as an integral part of sustainable development in the ASEAN Region, and noting the increasing number of collaborative activities between the organizations, jointly agree to enter into a collaboration through this Memorandum of Understanding. By an improvement of their health status, the ultimate beneficiaries of this Memorandum of Understanding are the peoples of the ASEAN Region.

**1. RATIONALE FOR COLLABORATION:**

One of the three main objectives of ASEAN is "to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the region through cooperative programmes." The objective of WHO is "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health" and one of WHO's function is to "act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work."

The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit held in Bangkok in December 1995 decided to elevate functional cooperation, including social development, to a higher plane. The WHO World Health Assembly passed a resolution (WHA49.19) in 1996 calling for forming new relations with "inter-governmental organizations concerned with health and health-related fields."

**2. POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COLLABORATION:**

In keeping with the priority areas expressed by the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the ASEAN Sub-Committee on Health and Nutrition held in August 1995 and July 1996, respectively; the WHO priorities expressed in the WHO Ninth General Programme of Work (covering the period 1996-2001); and the joint meeting of ASEAN and WHO Senior Officials on 11 June 1996, the following are identified as potential areas for collaboration:

- 2.1 Prevention and control of specific communicable diseases:** With an emphasis on malaria, dengue hemorrhagic fever, and other vector borne diseases; vaccine-preventable diseases (covered by the Expanded Programme on Immunization and the poliomyelitis eradication initiative); HIV/AIDS; tuberculosis, hepatitis and meningococcal meningitis.

- 2.2 **Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases:** With an emphasis on the promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- 2.3 **Environmental health:** Including the Healthy Cities and Healthy Islands initiatives.
- 2.4 **Essential drugs:** With an emphasis on quality assurance.
- 2.5 **New, emerging and re-emerging diseases:** With an emphasis on prevention and control programmes for high priority new, emerging and re-emerging diseases in the countries of ASEAN.
- 2.6 **Nutrition, Food Safety and Promotion of Health Diets:** With an emphasis on nutrition in transition, surveillance and malnutrition problems and their solutions.
- 2.7 **Dissemination and sharing of information:** Including materials on health promotion.
- 2.8 **Human resource development:** Including incorporating health in all poverty alleviation efforts and strengthening health as an integral component of women development efforts.
- 2.9 **Communicable disease control in border areas:** The strengthening of collaboration in the areas of communicable disease control may include the institutionalization of border meetings by ASEAN with provision of technical support by WHO.

### 3. ***MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATION:***

- 3.1 **Identification of focal points:** The Assistant Director responsible for health-related cooperation in the Functional Cooperation Bureau of the ASEAN Secretariat will serve as the designated focal point for ASEAN/WHO collaboration. The WHO Representative to Indonesia will serve as the WHO liaison for ASEAN/WHO collaboration and the Directors, Programme Management (DPM), of the WHO SEARO and WPRO will serve as the designated focal points for coordinating ASEAN/WHO collaboration within their respective Regional Offices. The Director, Division of Interagency Affairs will serve as the designated point for coordinating ASEAN/WHO collaboration within WHO Headquarters.
- 3.2 **Participation in ASEAN and WHO meetings:** ASEAN will invite WHO representation to the Meetings of the ASEAN Sub-Committee on Health and Nutrition (ASCH&N) and to other health-related meetings, as appropriate. WHO will invite ASEAN representation to the Regional Committee meetings of WHO and to other meetings, as appropriate.

- 3.3 Development of detailed plans of action for collaboration:** The ASEAN and WHO will prepare detailed plans of action for collaboration through mutual consultation. These plans will be finalized through a process of review and approval by both parties.
- 3.4 Mobilization of resources:** To implement the detailed plans of action for collaboration, ASEAN and WHO will explore ways to mobilize resources from the ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other donors.
- 3.5 Dissemination of and sharing of information:** ASEAN and WHO will share health-related publications and reports. As part of the development of a detailed plan of collaboration, ASEAN and WHO will consider possible joint publication of the "success story" of ASEAN/WHO collaboration in essential drugs and will explore possibilities of jointly publishing other health-related materials.
- 3.6 Review of the ASEAN/WHO collaboration:** At least once every two years, a Senior Officials meeting between ASEAN and WHO will be held to review the progress of ASEAN/WHO collaboration and identify potential areas for new collaborative activities.
- 3.7 Duration of this Memorandum of Understanding:** This Memorandum of Understanding is valid for a 5-year period and comes into force on the date of signing by the last signatory below and is renewable on the mutual agreement of both parties.

26, February, 1997



Dr. Prakrom Vuthipongse  
Chairman, ASEAN Sub-Committee  
on Health & Nutrition.  
On behalf of ASEAN

28, March, 1997



Dr. Uton Muchtar Rafei  
Regional Director, SEARO.  
On behalf of (the) South-East Asia  
Regional Office, WHO

18, April, 1997



Dr. S. T. Han  
Regional Director, WPRO.  
On behalf of the Western Pacific  
Regional Office, WHO