

7th December 2021

6th APCAT 2021- The Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors
“Together we bring health solutions”

Declaration

We, the delegates of the 6th APCAT - the Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors, recognize how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to remain a global public health emergency. The COVID-19 response has severely jeopardized health and development programmes of several nations in the region, forcing countries to undo and fritter away the gains they were making earlier towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. For instance, the alarming drop in routine immunization of children in several nations due to COVID-19 has increased the risk of vaccine-preventable illnesses.

This year in 2021, the inequitable and uneven rollout of vaccines against COVID-19 has made us even more vulnerable because of the heightened risk of serious outcomes and death among those who are unvaccinated (especially tobacco users or those with tobacco-related co-morbidities). Also, the risk of more mutations as the virus circulates in our population is a looming threat.

Health and social security are the central cog-in-the-wheel to accelerate progress towards all goals and targets of the SDGs. More scientific evidence is emerging to show that those most at risk of dying or becoming extremely ill from COVID-19 are those with pre-existing non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Tobacco is a leading common risk factor for major NCDs, accounting for over 70% of untimely deaths globally, and it also increases the risk of communicable diseases, including tuberculosis (TB).

We recognize that APCAT is a vital platform to share experiences, shape local actions, and secure greater leadership as well as looking for synergistic actions between specific health and development programmes.

We commit to accelerating progress towards eventually ending tobacco use, as well as preventing the avoidable burden of NCDs, eliminating TB and viral hepatitis and improving synergy between health and development programmes and promoting integrated responses where possible, and thereby averting untimely deaths, by:

1. Sustaining effective implementation of tobacco control programs that include smokefree environments; a complete ban of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; promotion of larger graphic health warnings with plain packaging on tobacco packs; smoking cessation programs; and a ban on electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, shisha and similar products;

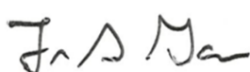


2. Ensuring NCD prevention and treatment services are not only sustained but scaled up with their inclusion in COVID-19 responses as part of health security, and co-design and implement solutions with input from civil society, consumers and people living with NCDs;
3. Continuing scale up of delivery of routine care, supplies of essential medicines and technologies, screening and diagnosis, access to resources, and supportive services for ongoing management of tuberculosis and other lung diseases;
4. Preventing interferences and rejecting funding, logistics, donations or grants from, and partnerships with, any entity related to any unhealthy commodity industries (such as, but not limited to, tobacco, alcohol, sugary and sweetened beverages);
5. Working with national government and policy makers to raise taxes and prices on unhealthy commodities (such as, but not limited to, tobacco products, alcohol, sugary and sweetened beverages);
6. Leveraging every possibility of partnership and integrated health and development responses so as to advance progress on scaling up of COVID-19 vaccination, routine immunization, adult vaccination for vaccine-preventable illnesses, among others;
7. Addressing the challenge of viral hepatitis as a major public health threat in the Asia Pacific region through elimination of mother to child transmission by raising public awareness and strengthening health systems through public and private partnerships;
8. Adhering to public health and scientific expertise for effective prevention and management of COVID-19, and by rebuilding our cities in a way that improves the public health system through One Health and Partnership for Healthy Cities approach.

We commit to doing everything to harness the power of our city governments to ensure that tobacco control, NCD prevention, TB control, elimination of viral hepatitis, routine immunization and scaling up COVID-19 vaccination are effectively implemented and measured, along with other health and development initiatives, and the recovery from COVID-19 is healthy, equitable and sustainable.



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