

Joint Statement
of the First Tripartite Health Ministers Meeting (TBMM)
Seoul, April 8th, 2007

We, the Health Ministers of China, Japan, and Korea, met in Seoul, Korea on April 8th, 2007, and discussed several issues of common concerns on health and medical field that includes pandemic influenza as well as clinical researches, emergency preparedness and response and traditional medicine.

I. Pandemic Influenza

1. The threat of pandemic influenza has been compounding with the increase in movement of people and goods among countries due to global trade liberalization and advancements in transportation. Accordingly, the need for close collaboration among the three countries is growing to minimize the spread of infectious disease into the nations as well as to protect public health, national economy, and national security.
2. However, social, economic, and cultural differences among the three countries and their dissimilar systems and procedures in health and medicine may be a stumbling block to a joint response against pandemic influenza. Therefore, in order to overcome such a potential impediment, it is vital for the three countries to share experiences and expertise, and enhance their cooperation.
3. Therefore, we, at the Health Ministers Meeting (hereinafter referred to as the "Ministers Meeting") which was held today, agreed on the following and reaffirmed our commitment to striving to protect public health and minimize any economic damage caused by pandemic influenza in Northeast Asia through mutual cooperation and exchanges.

First, three countries are focused on the following areas for joint activities related to pandemic influenza:

- (a) health quarantine, surveillance, and epidemiological investigation and rapid information sharing
- (b) diagnosis and treatment
- (c) research on vaccine development and anti-viral resistance
- (d) strategy development to minimize outbreaks, as well as joint simulations and desk-top exercises
- (e) rapid response and containment
- (f) cooperation in the development of public health laws and regulations and
- (g) other areas of cooperation that may be jointly decided upon by the Participants

Second, the following are the methods of effective cooperation related to pandemic influenza

- (a) cooperation in scientific and clinical programs and basic research projects
- (b) establishment of a joint working group to deal with issues related to pandemic influenza
- (c) designation of focal points for emergency contact and mutual cooperation
- (d) exchanging experts and training professional staff
- (e) information and technology sharing in support of activities of mutual interest
- (f) information sharing to deal with risk communications in advance
- (g) meetings, academic conferences, and joint desk-top exercises, and
- (h) annual meeting for related senior officials

Third, for joint activities identified in the second agreement, the three countries or their designees will take full responsibility for implementation, monitoring, and coordination of activities.

Fourth, all activities mentioned above are to be conducted in accordance with respective laws and regulations of the three countries and are subject to the availability of personnel, resources, and appropriated funds.

Fifth, measures for implementing all activities will be developed after this meeting through mutual consultations in accordance with common priorities.

II. Other Issues

1. Clinical Researches

Recognizing that East Asia has been rapidly gaining importance as a venue of today's worldwide drug development, three Ministers affirmed the significance of cooperation among three countries on clinical researches, including clinical trials, especially in clarifying the ethnic factors on the clinical data, in order to facilitate drug development.

2. Emergency Preparedness and Response including Disaster Management

Recognizing that international community is facing global health threats such as natural disasters and terrorisms, three Ministers agreed to consider the field of emergency preparedness and response as a future collaboration area among three countries.

3. Traditional Medicine

Recognizing the importance of traditional medicine in health care, the three ministers have agreed to consider traditional medicine as an area for future cooperation.

III. Next Meeting

1. The Ministers Meeting is to be held on a regular basis, all activities will be conducted on 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 coordinated with, or be supportive of, the activities and goals of other international health bodies.

2. The next Ministers Meeting will be held in Beijing, China.