

## **Appendix 15**

### **LSIF Letter to Ministers and Leaders**



## Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

30 October 2015

Honorable Ministers and Leaders:

This year under the leadership of the Philippines the APEC Life Sciences Innovation Forum (LSIF) contributed to APEC's achievement of significant milestones in health and life sciences that will help us attain and maintain a healthy and robust workforce, and access to well-resourced health systems for all citizens. We face significant challenges. Our new study of the fiscal and economic impact of ill health shows that we are starting to see the effects of the continuing rise in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) – projected in some economies to reach almost 9% in lost GDP within the next 15 years. The growth curve is steep. We assess that within the next five years, the situation will become untenable for both rapidly growing and mature economies unless measures are taken to slow the rate at which our people face disabilities and/or premature death that remove them from the workforce in some cases 10 years earlier than projected in a straight demographic analysis. Aging populations and, in some economies, lower birth rates will compound the effect, as will the continuing emergence and re-emergence of infectious disease.

To help mitigate the effects of NCDs and maintain the region's competitiveness, we recommend that APEC convene a broad cross-fora dialogue of health, finance, labor, education and economic stakeholders to discuss how to best marshal resources for high impact investments along the life course of our citizens. We have a good basis from which to work. In 2011, APEC Ministers endorsed the APEC NCD Action Plan, which sets out broad steps to accelerate regional action and collaboration to reduce the public health and economic burden of NCDs. The 5<sup>th</sup> APEC High-Level Meeting on Health & the Economy (HLM5) held in August 2015 in Cebu, Philippines, charted a new course for bringing innovations and partnerships into programs for strengthening health systems and addressing the areas of universal health coverage, health financing, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, and, preparedness for effective management of infectious diseases and health pandemics. Development Banks, industry, academics and governments discussed innovative ways of bridging the gap in health care financing to cover prevention and wellness programs, health literacy, early diagnosis and early intervention, the lack of which has contributed in no small way to the progression of the chronic disease profile in the region. Work is now underway examining the types of investments that would have the greatest impact.

The *Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Roadmap*, agreed here in Manila identifies Critical Success Factors and key actions that will provide a yardstick against which economies can assess not only their needs but the type of actions relevant to their own unique situation and thereby develop and implement their own NCD Action Plans. However, the health and life sciences communities cannot undertake this massive task alone. We need a strong whole-of-government commitment to health and platforms for policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement across multiple sectors of the economy. Implementation of the *Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Roadmap* will set the region apart globally in terms of the innovative partnerships,



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collaborations, and strategies to promote and secure better health and thus stem the tide of chronic disease and its fiscal and economic impact.

We are pleased to see that innovative partnerships are already being formed in critical areas. We welcome the launch of an APEC Digital Hub for Best and Innovative Practices in Mental Health Partnerships. With mental illness accounting for over one-third of all chronic diseases, this innovative initiative seeks to develop the skills needed in health systems and communities and ways of securing resources to develop a culture of mental wellness.

Peking University in Beijing, China has just established the APEC-Peking University Health Science Academy (HeSAY) as a new resource and coordinating mechanism to support regional and international collaborations and science-based research projects that will inform APEC Member Economies' health innovation strategies, including with respect to NCDs.

We are partnering with the ABAC to ensure the quality and integrity of the health value chain in order to improve access to safe, effective and good quality medical products and services, and we examined barriers in the health supply chain that are driving up the cost of health products.

We formed a partnership this year with the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) to support implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR), providing the core capacities at the economy level in order to prevent, detect, and respond to global infectious disease threats. We endorsed the *APEC-Global Health Security Agenda Framework for Strengthening Infection Control Infrastructure* and the *APEC Infection Control Support Package for Hand Hygiene* and will continue to support regional efforts to strengthen the infection control infrastructure through government and institutional-level improvements in core infection prevention knowledge and skills, antibiotic stewardship, hand hygiene, laboratory capacity, and surveillance and public reporting of health care associated infections. We also endorsed the *APEC Blood Supply Chain 2020 Roadmap* and welcomed the establishment of the Blood Supply Chain Partnership Training Network to secure the safety of the region's blood supply.

The LSIF continues to examine innovative models and partnerships for developing and prioritizing access to innovations in economies with the highest public health needs. The new dengue vaccine served as an illustration of "flipping the traditional model" for introducing a health innovation. Such partnerships are critical for strengthening local capacities, timely regulatory evaluation, and roll out of urgent interventions that can bring substantial health and economic benefits to APEC Economies.

Importantly too, given the demographics of the region, we supported the development of a toolkit that will facilitate women's participation in the economy through improved health. These all are very positive examples of the types of innovative approaches to improving health and work force competitiveness. But if we are to properly use the tools recommended in the *Healthy Asia Pacific 2020* initiative to mitigate the effects of chronic disease, compounded by underlying infectious disease, we will need to challenge



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traditional thinking in a range of other areas including financing, diagnostics, prevention and wellness programs, treatment and care. We hope to begin that process in 2016 with our cross-fora dialogue and build a community of interest dedicated to halting the chronic disease crisis through innovation and target partnerships.

We recommend that Ministers and Leaders:

1. Endorse the statement of the *Joint Statement of the 5<sup>th</sup> APEC High Level Meeting on Health and the Economy*; and,
2. Endorse the *Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Roadmap*; and,
3. Endorse the *APEC-Global Health Security Agenda Framework for Strengthening Infection Control Infrastructure* and the *APEC Infection Control Support Package for Hand Hygiene*; and,
4. Endorse the *APEC Blood Supply Chain 2020 Roadmap* and welcome the establishment of the *APEC Blood Supply Chain Partnership Training Network*; and,
5. Welcome the launch of the *APEC Digital Hub for Best and Innovative Practices in Mental Health Partnerships*, hosted by institutions in Canada, with core partners from around the region.

Sincerely,

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