Session 3. Climate Change and Health

3.2 Policy Discussion

Guiding Questions: All member economies are strongly encouraged to participate in the discussion.

1. **What are the priorities for your economy in addressing health and the health system impacts of climate change?**
    - Thailand by the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) identify climate change as a risk factor on health and well-being. The World Health Organization predicts that by the year 2070, more than 2.5 million Thais will be affected by climate change, including rising temperatures, sea level rise, and more frequent and intense disasters.
    - The Ministry of Public Health has developed the Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP), Phase 1 (2021 – 2030) functions as crucial guidelines enabling the multisectoral partnership to strengthen and build health resilience from climate change. The objectives of HNAP are to reduce illness, lessen health impacts, and become a center for health and climate change in aspect of climate change induced health risk management. The HNAP's goal is to reduce illness and mortality and build a robust public health system, promoting public awareness and equipping people with skills to manage health risks related to climate change.
    - HNAP includes the following components:
        - **H: Health Literacy** - Strengthening community resilience and people's skills in adapting to and managing their own health risks.
        - **N: Networking** - Integrating capacities from all sectors to drive health responses to climate change.
        - **A: Advocacy** - Strengthening the country's preparedness in public health to support economic, social, and national security development, taking climate change into account.
        - **P: Public Health Preparedness** - Developing the country's public health system to cope with climate change in line with international standards.
    - HNAP is aligned and connected with the country-level adaptation plans, including the National Adaptation Plan and the National Climate Change Master Plan for 2015-2030 of Thailand. It is directed towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 13, which involves urgent actions to combat climate change and its resulting impacts.

2. **What progress has your economy made in strengthening the climate resilience and environmental sustainability of health systems and health facilities?**
    - Thailand by MOPH and WHO have 2 projects on "strengthening the climate resilience and environmental sustainability of health systems in Thailand". The key activities and progress include:
        1) Developing the capacity of health personnel at all levels to have knowledge and understanding of climate change adaptation. Thailand has established courses for climate change adaptation in public health and capacity-building programs for health personnel to support a climate resilient health system.
        2) Developing the climate-resilient healthcare facilities guidelines for Thailand following the WHO framework. This aims to provide healthcare facilities with strategies for preparedness, response, and protection of public health from significant future climate change. The guidelines cover ten components: 1) Policy aspects, 2) Human resource development, 3) Assessment of capacity, vulnerability, and adaptation 4) Integration of risk monitoring and early warning communication, 5) Health and climate research, 6) Climate resilience, sustainability, technology, and infrastructure, 7) Environmental health determinant management, 8) Improvement of climate-sensitive environmental health management, 9) Preparedness and management in emergencies, and 10) Health and climate finance.

3. **What are the opportunities for the public and private sector to work together to reduce health sector climate impacts, including in hospitals and medical supply chains?**

There are several opportunities for the public and private sectors such as

- **"GREEN and CLEAN Hospital":** Public and private sectors can work together to develop sustainable healthcare infrastructure, including green hospitals and healthcare facilities. Thailand by MOPH has program named "GREEN and CLEAN Hospital" (G: GARBAGE management and recycling programs, R: RESTROOM, E: ENERGY-efficient technologies, E: ENVIRONMENT-friendly design, N: NUTRITION). The project aims to create a healthier environment and reduce their carbon footprint and overall environmental impact, while promoting community participation. Public

and private stakeholders can come together to support these initiatives and ensure their effective implementation.

- **Climate Resilience and Disaster Preparedness:** Hospitals and medical supply chains can benefit from joint efforts in enhancing climate resilience and disaster preparedness. Public health agencies and private healthcare providers can share resources and expertise to develop robust response plans for extreme weather events and other climate-related emergencies.
- **Research and Innovation**: Joint research and innovation projects can be undertaken to find more sustainable healthcare solutions. For example, Thailand by MOPH has MOU with the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), the Department of Meteorology, the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA) to develop research projects on establishing monitoring standards related to climate change, developing databases, and health impact surveillance to prevent health consequences resulting from climate change.
- **Capacity Building:** Public and private sectors can join forces to raise awareness and build capacity among healthcare professionals and staff regarding climate change and its health impacts. Thailand by MOPH has collaboration with GIZ and universities developed training programs on climate change and health to foster a shared understanding of the importance of climate action in the healthcare sector.

Overall, by working together, the public and private sectors can have a more significant and lasting impact on reducing health sector climate impacts, making healthcare systems more resilient to climate change while contributing to a sustainable future.

4. **How can APEC, including the cross-fora and economic cooperation of APEC, be leveraged to address climate and health?**

APEC economies can collaboratively address the complex challenges posed by climate change to public health such as

- APEC can **promote "GREEN & CLEAN hospitals programs"**: encourage member economies to adopt green and sustainable practices in their healthcare systems, including hospitals and medical supply chains. This could involve sharing success stories and best practices from economies that have made progress in this area. –

- APEC can **create a Climate and Health working group** that brings together experts from member economies to address the health impacts of climate change. This group can facilitate sharing of knowledge, collaboration in research, and development of best practices to mitigate and adapt to climate-related health challenges.
- APEC can **promote capacity building** initiatives and facilitate the exchange of information and expertise on climate-health issues. This could include organizing workshops, training programs, and conferences to raise awareness and knowledge among member economies
- APEC can **support climate-resilient health care facilities** by advocate for investments in climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure and technologies. This may include incentivizing the public and private sectors to invest in green hospitals, renewable energy solutions, and disaster-resistant healthcare facilities

5. **Some economies are working to align climate-related policies on procurement with other governments, seeking to clarify emissions reporting requirements from suppliers to their heath systems. The hope is that this will clarify expectations of suppliers and also attract alignment from private sector healthcare providers (and other governments). Are there any similar efforts underway in APEC's economies?**
   - Thailand by ONEP, MONRE has compiled greenhouse gas emissions inventories for five sectors, including the energy sector, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, forestry and land use, and waste sector. The MOPH is involved in the waste sector and has supported data on the number of incinerators, the quantity of infected medical waste, and the management of infected medical waste for calculating greenhouse gas emissions.
   - Thailand has international collaborations (such as GIZ, WHO) for knowledge sharing and capacity building activities. Thailand is exploring ways to align climate-related policies and engage private sector healthcare providers in climate action efforts.
   - We hope that the best practice exchanges within APEC's economies could facilitate the adoption of effective strategies and initiatives to address climate change impacts on healthcare systems across the region.