

 <b>MINISTRY OF HEALTH &amp; WELFARE</b>		<b>Press Release</b>	
<b>Distribution</b>	<b>July 27, 2015</b>	<b>Department</b>	Division of International Cooperation

## **The special Health Ministers video conference of "ASEAN plus 3" for strengthened cooperation in responding to MERS-CoV**

A joint statement for cooperative ways to respond to MERS-CoV was announced at the special video conference.

- The Ministry of Health and Welfare (the Minister is Moon Hyung-pyo) said that the special MERS video conference was held at 15:30 on July 27 Korean time among Ministers of Health from "ASEAN plus 3", in order to share details about the status of MERS-CoV outbreaks in East Asian countries and to come up with cooperative ways to control and prevent infection.

- Participants in this conference include Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Health from 10 ASEAN countries\* and three East Asian countries of South Korea, China and Japan; and representatives from the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) and the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO). This is the first ministerial teleconference which considers the urgency of the situation following the introduction of MERS-CoV into the Republic of Korea and the importance of the issue.

- Kwon Deok-cheol, the head of Office for Healthcare Policy under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, announced details about the progression of the outbreak in the Republic of Korea and its government's response measures; and recent reports about MERS-CoV from China, Thailand and Malaysia were shared.

\* 10 ASEAN countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Brunei and Cambodia

- The member states announced a joint statement which specifies cooperative ways for strengthening preparedness and response for MERS-CoV, including the sharing of border quarantine information, contact tracing, and research cooperation. According to the joint statement, a global experts meeting will be convened, which is aimed at the sharing of the Republic of Korea's experience with MERS among countries (See Annex).

- This conference has been held every two years among Ministers of Health from the ASEAN and three East Asian countries, in order to reinforce healthcare cooperation, including the sharing of healthcare policies and technologies, and the coordinated response for infection control. From the sixth conference held in 2014, the Republic of Korea and Vietnam became its co-chairs. In December 2014, the "special Health Ministers conference of the ASEAN and three countries for responding to Ebola virus" was convened in Bangkok, Thailand for coordinated response to prevent the spread of the virus around West Africa, and a joint statement was announced.

※ **An outline of ASEAN+3(Association of South-East Asian nations Plus 3)**

- **ASEAN+3:** This is a forum which functions to enhance East Asian regional cooperation among 10 ASEAN countries\* and three East Asian countries of South Korea, China and Japan. Since it was launched in 1997, the ASEAN+3 has worked for greater coordination between countries in every sector such as politics, national security, economy, society and culture.

\* 10 ASEAN countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Brunei and Cambodia

- **ASEAN+3 Health Ministers Conference:** This was launched in 2004 with the aim of greater cooperation including the sharing of healthcare policies and technologies, and the coordinated response for infection control, in connection with the ASEAN+3. A ministerial meeting is convened every two years. The sixth Health Ministers conference was held in September 2014.

\* Since 2014, its co-chairs have been the Republic of Korea and Vietnam.