

## 56<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO TROPMED Network Governing Board Meeting

### Opening Ceremony

September 8, 2017

8:30 am

Makati Diamond Residences

- **Dr. Zaw Wint**- Representing GBM for Brunei Darussalam
- **Dr. Touch Sonkeang, MD, MHA**- Representing GBM for from Cambodia
- **Dr. Drupadi HS Dilon** – Representing GBM for Indonesia
- **Dr. Somphou Sayasone** – Representing GBM for Lao PDR
- **Datuk Dr. Shahnaz Binti Murad** – Representing GBM, Malaysia
- **Dr. Su Su Lin**- Representing GBM for Myanmar
- **H.E. Dr. Pauly Jean B. Rosell-Ubial, MPH, CESO II** – Representing GBM for Philippines
- **Assoc. Prof. Kon Dow Rhooon**- Representing GBM for Singapore
- **Dr. Rungrueng Kitphati** – Representing GBM for Thailand
- **Mrs. Nguyen Thi Minh Chau** – Representing GBM for Vietnam

#### TROPMED Network Centres

##### TROPMED Malaysia

- Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Bt. Kamaludin
- Dr. Rohani Ahmad

##### TROPMED Philippines

- Prof. Romeo R. Quizon
- Dr. Carl Abelardo Antonio
- Dr. Vicente Y. Belizerio, Jr.

##### TROPMED Thailand

- Prof. Srivicha Krudaood
- Prof. Usa Boonyuen

##### PARTNERS

- Dr. Gundo Aurel Weiler – WHO Representative, Manila
- Mr. Zimmbodilion Mosende – UNAIDS Country Director
- Asst. Prof. Mitsuya Kodama – University of Ryukyus, Japan
- Prof. Huamin Wang, MD, PhD- Hainan Medical University, P. R. China
- Dr. Yuichi Chigusa – Dokkyo Medical University, Japan

Excellencies, Governing Board Members, SEAMEO- TROPMED Officials, guests, ladies, and gentlemen, good morning. It is my honor to represent the Philippine Minister of Education, Secretary Leonor M. Briones at the opening of the 56<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO TROPMED Network Governing Board Meeting.

As an organization that has continued to nurture human capacities and explored the peoples' fullest potential, SEAMEO maintains its work and aspirations for development with people of the region to make lives better in quality and equity in education, **preventive health education**, culture and tradition, information and communication technology, languages, poverty alleviation and agriculture and natural resources.

The nations of Southeast Asia have been hampered to a great degree in our social and economic development by tropical diseases contributing to a low standard of health. The Ministers of SEAMEO believe that "**healthy economy needs healthy community**" and for this reason it was decided that steps should be taken at the regional level to solve health problems through a regional cooperation.

The SEAMEO TROPMED Network focal point in higher education and research in tropical and public health. Our main goal is to have a healthy environment for all in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through promoting cooperation in postgraduate training as well as research for the prevention, control and eradication of endemic, emerging, and re-emerging diseases and other public health issues so as to improve the health and standards of living of the people of Southeast Asia.

Some current public health issues confronting children, young people, and adolescents in the Philippines are **malnutrition, diseases, substance abuse, mental health issues, violence, injuries, and sexual and reproductive health concerns**.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education continues to raise efforts in relation to health and development of our youth. The implementation of **School-Based Feeding Program** addresses malnutrition and short term hunger among public school children. Our **School-Based Immunization Program** is also implemented as to the government's effort in the morbidity and mortality of school -aged children due to vaccine- related preventable diseases.

The Department recently issued policies on tobacco control and illegal **policies on tobacco control and illegal drugs** to prevent substance abuse among students. Through these policies, we can ensure that our learners have the capacity to develop their potential with healthy minds and body.

It is mandate of the Department to ensure that all schools are conducive to education and the best interest of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

Thus, Department of Education has a **Zero Tolerance Policy** for any forms of violence (e.g. Abuse, discrimination, exploitation, and bullying). We aim to ensure that special protection is provided to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect their normal development. This is covered under the school- based Child Protection Policy issued in 2012.

As we implement these policies, we still have a long way to go to develop strategies that will address other public health concerns such as mental health, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

We look forward to partnership with Tropmed Centres to continuously address public health issues, especially those that affect children and young people. Thank you and good morning.