**JOINT STATEMENT BY ASEAN**

**HRC CONSULTATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE HIV RESPONSE**

**PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN HIV RESPONSE:**

**REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES**

**Panel 2: Improving human rights in HIV response through**

**regional and subregional strategies**

**Delivered by H.E. Mr. Sek Wannamethee**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations**

**12 February 2019, 15:00-16:30 hrs, Room XII, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

Mr. / Madam Chair,

I have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN has a longstanding commitment to combatting HIV/AIDS and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to today’s discussion.

The ASEAN experience shows that **regional dialogue and cooperation, underpinned by strong and sustained political will, are crucial in strengthening the HIV response.**

In 1992, the ASEAN Leaders agreed to make a coordinated effort in curbing the spread of AIDS by exchanging information on AIDS, particularly in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. This led to the establishment of the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS to carry out regional work programs on AIDS.

In 2011, ASEAN Leaders committed to working towards **an ASEAN with Zero New HIV Infections, Zero AIDS-related Deaths and Zero Discrimination**, includingby promoting the health, dignity and human rights of people living with HIV and key affected populations.

In 2016, ASEAN Leaders agreed to **fast track and sustain HIV and AIDS responses to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.** They expressed a commitment to **ensuring that no one is left behind in the AIDS response,** and working towards a response where there is equal access to high-quality services, prevention, treatment, care and support and no one is denied such services because of HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

The **“ASEAN Cities Getting to Zero” project** is a flagship regional initiative. The project began with 13 pilot cities in 2012 and has been scaled up to over 70 cities. By facilitating exchange of good practices among city health officials, the project is a powerful example of South-South and city-to-city collaboration.

These regional initiatives on HIV response have been a significant success, as **between 2010 and 2017 HIV infections in ASEAN have declined by 19%.**

As ASEAN pursues a people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN Community, it places a high priority on **inclusiveness and** **advancing multi-stakeholder partnerships,** including with the private sector and civil society organizations.

**The ASEAN Business Coalition on HIV-AIDS** was established to promote greater involvement of employers’ associations in HIV prevention and control in the workplace. Several companies have received the “ASEAN Red Ribbon for Outstanding Workplaces” awards for their initiatives, including those that promote non-discriminatory policies and environment for workers with HIV.

With an estimated 1.7 million people affected by HIV in the ASEAN region, we cannot afford, and will strive not, to leave them behind in the realization of a people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN Community and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.