DEVELOPING A HEALTH COOPERATION STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION (2018-2022)

egional health cooperation is a priority under the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program. Efforts to enhance regional integration and cooperation, while fundamental to economic growth in the subregion, expose GMS countries to an evolving layer of health challenges.

Increased mobility and trade facilitates cross-border movement of disease agents and their vectors.

Greater intra-regional population movement brings risk of marginalisation of migrant and mobile persons and their exclusion from social protections, most critically access to essential health services. Border economic zone development, while central to GMS countries' efforts to diversify their economies and integrate with regional value chains, carries an inherent risk of adverse public health impacts.

In parallel with these threats, regional integration creates opportunities to draw on the subregion's health leadership, human resource skills and programming experience to address common health challenges.

Acknowledging the pivotal role of health cooperation to the GMS vision of an integrated,

prosperous and equitable subregion, the 22nd GMS Ministerial Conference endorsed the creation of a new GMS Working Group on Health Cooperation (WGHC) and the development of a GMS Health Cooperation Strategy.

The GMS Health Cooperation Strategy 2018-2022 provides a framework to guide collective efforts among GMS countries, health sector stakeholders and development partners to tackle health issues impacting the subregion. Guided by the vision of "an integrated, prosperous, and equitable GMS where health and wellbeing are shared by all", the Strategy sets out priority areas for regional cooperation, focused around three strategic outcomes:

- Improved GMS health system performance in responding to public health threats;
- Strengthened social resilience to the health impacts of regional integration; and
- Enhanced human resource capacity to respond to priority health issues in the GMS

Three programming pillars, aligned with each strategic outcome, are defined. Program areas under each pillar constitute the operational priorities for GMS health cooperation. Cross cutting





themes to be mainstreamed under each program and key enablers that facilitate effective delivery of health cooperation are identified.

A product of extensive consultation with GMS partners at both country and regional levels, the GMS Health Cooperation Strategy is currently being prepared for final endorsement by the WGHC and the GMS Health Ministers, or their duly designated officials.

Figure 1: GMS Health Cooperation Framework (2018-2022)

An integrated, prosperous, and equitable subregion where health and wellbeing are shared by all

OUTCOMES

Improved GMS health system performance in responding to public health threats Strengthened social resilience to the health impacts of regional integration Enhanced human resource capacity to respond to priority health issues in the GMS

PILLAR 1

Health security as a regional public good

Program 1.1: Core International Health Regulation capacities of public health systems

Program 1.2: One Health response to public health threats

Program: 1.3: Cross-border and subregional cooperation on health security

Synergies between regional platforms and programs

PILLAR 2

Border area and migrant health

Program 2.1: Border area health

Program 2.2: Health impacts in border economic zone development

Program 2.3: Universal health coverage for migrant and mobile populations

PILLAR 3 Health workforce

development

Program 3.1: Regional health cooperation leadership

Program 3.2: Intra-regional learning and experience transfer

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Policy convergence

Gender mainstreaming

Inclusive development

ENABLERS

Development partner engagement

Information and communications technology

Research & Inter-sectoral cooperation knowledge products



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