



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2024/HLM-HE/JMS

**Joint Statement - 14th High Level Meeting on Health
and the Economy 2024**



**14th High Level Meeting on Health and
the Economy
Lima, Peru
18 August 2024**

APEC High Level Meeting on Health and the Economy

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14th APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy Statement

“Health inclusivity: the path to empowerment and growth that leaves no one behind”

1. The 14th APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy (HLMHE14) convened in Lima on August 18, 2024, under the theme “Health inclusivity: the path to empowerment and growth that leaves no-one behind” and in support of the APEC 2024 overarching theme “Empower. Include. Growth”, the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 including through the implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA). The HLMHE14 was chaired by the Minister of Health of Peru, Dr. Cesar Vasquez.
2. The world is at a critical juncture in terms of achieving sustainable, resilient, inclusive economic growth. Health and the well-being of our citizens will remain critical for responding to current and emerging challenges. In this context, preparedness, coordination, and cooperation among APEC economies is of paramount importance in order to propel economic growth.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us valuable lessons about the importance of preparedness, coordination and collaboration in responding to health emergencies. Reflecting on these lessons and incorporating them into our strategies is crucial as we move forward. In this context, we are committed to strengthening capacities to prevent, detect and respond effectively to future health emergencies including pandemics and outbreaks, through strengthened implementation of our regional and global commitments. This work requires a thorough review and analysis of the actions taken during the pandemic, as well as the addition of best practices into our future plans. We recommend continuing these efforts to outline actions already being undertaken to improve global health architecture as a result of COVID-19.
4. In this context, we strongly support the need to build sustainable, resilient and inclusive health systems that identify and adapt to future health challenges and use digital health tools such as telehealth to expand access to quality health services as economies move toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC), including through equitable healthcare access to improve health outcomes and strengthen health systems in the Asia-Pacific region.

Intersection Between Gender and Health

5. We support efforts to advance gender equality and women’s economic empowerment as critical aspects of public health and as part of our contribution to the Implementation Plan of the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019-2030). We are committed to achieving better health outcomes by promoting gender equality and addressing sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as well as women and girls’ health needs in the Asia-Pacific region.
6. We will take further actions to reduce the risk of infections, including through vaccination against human papillomavirus (HPV), as one of the key actions to improve women's health and promote their full participation in the economy. In this regard, we recognize the importance of renewing the APEC Roadmap to Promote the Sustainable Economic Advancement for Women through Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control (2021- 2025). We reaffirm our commitment to accelerate cervical cancer elimination, in alignment with global goals and targets for the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem.
7. We welcome economies’ interest in updating the APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Policy Toolkit to achieve women’s full and equal economic participation. We remain committed to enhancing the sharing of best practices and lessons learned to build resilient systems to ensure women's well-being and to meet future health challenges.

Universal and Community Mental Health and Wellbeing

8. Mindful of the fact that mental health has a direct impact on sustainable economic growth, we will continue strengthening the health and wellbeing of our people in a holistic manner

including by protecting and promoting mental health. We recognize that UHC includes community mental health approaches and proper responses are key to addressing this public health challenge.

9. We believe in a patient-centered approach and community-based approach to primary health care that promotes prevention, active participation, and solidarity. It is essential to foster comprehensive strategies that consider accessibility, social interaction and creativity as collective resources for mental health care and psychological support services. We therefore urge economies to continue supporting APEC's work on promoting and improving access to mental health and psychosocial services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Impacts of Climate Change on Health

10. We recognize environmental challenges, including climate change, extreme weather and natural disasters have an impact on health, as well as on food systems, water safety, air pollution, among others, affecting the well-being of all people and preventing them from accessing health services and treatment in an effective manner. We also reiterate the importance of strengthening health systems to be climate-resilient, energy efficient and sustainable, and equitable to better prepare people in vulnerable situations for the impacts of climate change. In this regard, and in line with the Bangkok Goals on BCG Economy, we will continue to promote actions to reduce the impact of climate change on people's health and well-being.
11. We acknowledge that new health threats have emerged and existing threats have intensified including as a result of extreme temperatures and weather events, such as increased epidemiological alerts for vector-borne diseases, dengue fever, lymphatic filariasis and malaria, among others. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of enhancing collaboration mechanisms, coordinating strategies and incorporating digital technologies to monitor, manage and reduce the risk posed by these threats, while continuing to support efforts to reduce their impacts in the Asia-Pacific region.

Importance of Immunization Throughout Life Course

12. We reaffirm our commitment to improving immunization efforts across the life course. We recognize the importance of prioritizing well-being and health at all stages of life, from early childhood through adolescence, adulthood and older ages. We are also committed to reducing the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases faced by older persons. In this regard, we support the implementation of the APEC Action Plan on Vaccination Across the Life Course.
13. We recognize immunization programs with integrated care approaches as key elements in strengthening primary health care, which we acknowledge as the foundation for more resilient health systems. We further recognize that sustainable healthcare financing, prevention and health promotion strategies as pillars to address future threats and challenges, as well as to promote health education and improve health information and communication and addressing misinformation and disinformation.

Looking Ahead

14. We recognize the vital work and contributions of the health workforce in our health systems. Their dedication and commitment are cornerstones of providing quality and inclusive health care services to our people. In this regard, it is imperative to strengthen the health workforce and capacities, ensuring inclusivity, and the provision of quality and affordable health care services, by incorporating the use of digital technologies to enhance the efficiency of health systems.
15. We reaffirm the importance of strengthening partnership and collaboration with other regional and global organizations, the private sector, and stakeholders as appropriate. We also reiterate the importance of enhancing APEC cross-fora collaboration as necessary with relevant APEC's committees and sub-fora. We also welcome the reinvigoration of APEC's work on facilitating regulatory cooperation to enhance access to safe, effective and quality assured medical products and improve public health.

16. We appreciate and value the great contribution of the work made by the HWG's sub working groups on vaccination, digital health and mental wellness. We welcome the endorsement of the terms of reference for the APEC Health Science Academy (HeSAy) and will continue related work.
17. We thank the participation of the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).
18. We look forward to the next 15th APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy. We also look ahead to Health-related activities in 2025.