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ASEAN'S RESPONSE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: NATURE, ROLE AND MAIN CHALLENGES¹

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Introduction

By their very nature, communicable diseases in Southeast Asia represent a transnational challenge as they do not respect borders and cannot be resolved at the national level alone. While this past decade has seen successes in communicable disease prevention and control in the region and increased incidences of non-communicable diseases (cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases) in Southeast Asia, these pathogens remain major regional public health issues with serious socioeconomic consequences.

Responding to such concerns is not only a matter for the individual, as health issues have the ability to impact social stability and economic prosperity in Southeast Asia. Meeting health standards also forms part of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, governments in Southeast Asia have to rise to the challenge of meeting this formidable problem through regional cooperation and integration.

Given the rapid evolution of global health governance these last two decades and the fact that regional organizations have progressively become actors of regional and global health, this chapter seeks an understanding as to the ways in which the

¹This research has been partially funded by Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages within the framework of a collective research project on "Challenges and Opportunities in Asia-Pacific Regional Development" (01 May -31 December 2017) and by the Taiwan's Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) under the project MOST 104-2410-H-160-001-MY2.