

# Innovative Thinking and Action for Health

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GRAPHIC: BT

**I**NNOVATION means the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something. The process of thinking up something new or thinking about something old in a new way is called innovative thinking. The Union Minister for Health and Sports mentioned that we will do out of the box thinking, innovative thinking, and identifying newer approaches and practicing epidemiologic thinking. Moreover Peter Ferdinand Drucker, the widely known management consultant, educator and author said, “all organizations require one core competency: innovation.” Innovative thinking is nothing like we are born with and how we develop innovative thinking. As it is far from being something we are born with, we can all become innovative and creative by developing the attributes that are common to all innovative people; thinking outside of the box, continually curious, looking at life from another’s perspective, good listeners, lack of emotional attachments, etc.

Among all the good and progress being made in the world, there are much more yet to be done. Nowadays, the world is facing so many problems; climate change, pollution, malnourishment and hunger and substance abuse, etc. The global temperatures are rising and are estimated to increase from 2.6 degrees Celsius to 4.8 degrees Celsius by 2100. This would cause more severe weather, crises with food and resources and the spread of diseases. Pollution is one of the most difficult global issues to combat. People all over the world are challenged by various types of pollution; water, air, noise and soil, etc. Currently, there are 795 million people who do not have enough food to eat. The problems of hunger and malnourishment are closely intertwined with poverty.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the global challenges, including poverty, climate, environment degradation, prosperity and peace & justice. At the same time, SDGs are considered a universal competence which should be added to all governments’ compulsory agenda.

According to the Alma-Ata Declaration in 1978, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity and is a fundamental human

right and that the attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important world-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.

As it is widely accepted that health and wellbeing cannot be addressed from within the health sector alone, mental and social factors make themselves a room for health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a state of wellbeing in which individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. The WHO stresses that mental health “is not just the absence of mental disorder.” Mental health can affect daily life, relationships and even physical health. Mental health includes a person’s ability to enjoy life to attain a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. It is important at every stage of life from childhood to adult and common among people. Mental disorders are also associated with more than 90% of the one million suicides that occur annually. Suicide is a global public health problem that deserves attention from national health authorities in order to make policies and directives aimed to promote the public’s mental health. According to the WHO, more than 800,000 people die by suicide a year, making it the principal cause of death among people fifteen to twenty-nine years old. Myanmar’s mental health policy

was last revised in 1995, including within the general health policy. The last revision of the mental health plan was in 2006. The mental health legislation which was enacted in 1912, entitled the Lunacy Act 1912 is outdated. Myanmar Medical Association and Sanofi created Community-Based Intervention Program to increase

included to the strategy. The dynamic, robust, responsive and efficient health information system (HIS) is a basic prerequisite for effective functioning of the health care delivery system.

The role of IT in health care cannot be omitted as it has potential to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of healthcare. En-

eracy of community and providing effective and efficient health care to public. It is served as a knowledge sharing platform and also provides Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support services for health facilities. The tablet contains standardized health messages, essential manuals, guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for health professionals regarding public health care, medical care, laboratory, food and drug administration, planning, budgeting and staff affairs and research.

Myanmar’s government has expressed a strong commitment to accelerating progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in which all people have access to needed health services of quality without experiencing financial hardship. Getting access to clean water and nutrition run first on the way to Health. In the endeavor to achieve UHC, we need to consider integrative parallel thinking of harmonized effective development by working together with collaboration of the following sectors; transportation as well as agriculture, communication and electricity.

The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) Community should put their efforts in this endeavor as the environment is an important factor contributing to disease and mortality in the developing world, including countries in Asia. We need to think globally and at locally. The importance of disease control programmes become increasingly pressing. For example, the “Actions Against Dengue: Dengue Day Campaigns Across Asia” was subsequently produced

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access to treatment.

Social health is a person’s ability to interact and form appropriate relationships with other individuals. If a person is socially healthy, he or she is more likely to have a stronger immune system and even when he or she suffers from one health problem or another, he or she is more likely to recover from it quickly. Socially healthy persons are less likely to have depression; which means they are mentally and emotionally healthier. It has significant impact on a person’s mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

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tering data into a computerized system is much less time-consuming than paper-based methods. It also reduces the risk of errors in patient data. Accessing patient records digitally can be done in an instant and viewed via portable devices increasing efficiency and productivity.

In Myanmar, Township and Station medical officers and Basic Health Staff are major health care givers in rural and remote area, where 70% of population including ethnics group reside. Recently, the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) has launched Information Technology (IT) supported capacity building program through distribution of mobile tablets to those health care givers, with the objectives of enhancing their ability, promoting health lit-

by ASEAN and WHO to document regional and national activities to commemorate ASEAN Dengue Day, every 15th June of each year. Another example gives us the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), emerged as a major catalyst which works closely with key partners in ASEAN Member States for the advances made in tobacco control in South East Asia Region.

The Member States of ASEAN have a rich heritage of traditional medicine. As traditional medicine is the most widely available and affordable source of health care in ASEAN, its role in the primary health care cannot be omitted. In Myanmar, traditional medicine has existed since time immemorial. It is kind of like we are born with and the reliability of the public on traditional medicine has never been the least. So the risk of exploitation on people’s reliability is an issue to be considered. Different ethnic groups have traditional knowledge and practices evolved from different ethnological, cultural, geographical, philosophical backgrounds. The main purpose is to put this knowledge into good use in the daily routine of their life.

In conclusion, while all the countries are marching to the UHC, it should be highlighted that innovative thinking and action for health is an essential platform for achieving UHC.

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