



MINISTRY OF
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA URGES CHINA, JAPAN AND KOREA TO FORGE STRONGER COLLABORATION WITH ASEAN IN DEVELOPING COVID-19 VACCINE

Senior Minister and Minister of International Trade and Industry Dato' Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali today urged the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to resort to greater partnership with ASEAN member countries in developing the COVID-19 vaccine.

At the Special ASEAN Plus Three Economic Ministers' (AEM+3) Virtual Conference Meeting on COVID-19 Response held this afternoon, the Minister also made an earnest call for the grouping to further enhance collaborative efforts in facing and overcoming this crisis, noting that by pulling our resources together, we would have the capacity and capability to find a long and lasting solution. He added that creating synergy and unity is the key to success in the battle and AEM+3 must expand the scope of cooperation with solidarity, vision and leadership.

Azmin also urged ASEAN to consider *en bloc* measures to procure vaccines in order to increase the chances of vaccine availability for the region. Korea and China, being advanced on their vaccine trials, should also consider allowing ASEAN member states to produce vaccines to drive costs down and ensure mass availability and accelerate ASEAN as a region for biotech innovation.

Earlier in the morning, at the Special ASEAN Economic Ministers' (AEM) Virtual Conference Meeting on COVID-19 Response the Minister commended the private sector in fighting the pandemic jointly with the governments of ASEAN Member States. He stressed that the support from the private sector is crucial in supporting the initiatives taken by governments in addressing the adverse impact of the pandemic not only to the business community but also to the lives and livelihoods of the people in ASEAN.

“The strategic collaboration between governments and the private sector is indeed a manifestation of the ASEAN theme this year which is to act in a ‘Cohesive and Responsive’ manner in dealing with the challenges,” he added.

With regard to flattening the COVID-19 curve, the Minister noted that before the Movement Control Order, the infectivity rate was 3.55 and has been reduced to 0.3 now. Azmin also stressed that this pandemic is much more than a health crisis, which therefore requires a total and collective government-society response.

The Minister said that like other member states, Malaysia too has had to grapple with the challenge of striking the right balance between protecting lives as well as livelihoods, namely, between making the most strident efforts to contain the spread of the virus and taking vigorous initiatives at ensuring the viability of the economy.

In this regard, apart from successfully managing the COVID-19 situation from the health perspective, Malaysia has also introduced measures to bolster the economy, minimise job losses, protect incomes and secure the economic sustainability of the nation.

Malaysia implemented three Stimulus Packages worth RM280 billion aimed at supporting various parts of the community, encompassing informal sectors, families, the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and businesses.

According to the Minister, the COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed a global socio-economic tsunami with severe repercussions on all economies big and small. As countries all over the world impose movement restriction orders in efforts to fight the outbreak, our economies suffer unintended consequences, creating extreme uncertainty on growth forecast.

At the AEM+3 meeting, Azmin thanked China, Korea and Japan for their assistance and support in the region’s battle against the pandemic and expressed concern with the rapid spread of the virus globally.



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“Malaysia adopted a “targeted approach” in testing COVID-19 cases by zooming in on clusters of infections as well as identifying localities with high rates of infections, and tracing as well as testing their close contacts and immediate surroundings,” he said. The Minister commended frontliners for having worked tirelessly to stop the further spread of COVID-19 and reduce new cases of infection. On public-private partnership collaboration, the Minister said that Malaysia is in the process of developing a quantitative antigen test kit to detect the level of antibodies of an individual towards the virus causing the COVID-19 infection.

Azmin added that Malaysia has been offered to work with the World Health Organisation for the ‘Solidarity Trial’ research project in discovering a potential cure for COVID-19 and expressed confidence that with continued and collective capabilities, the region will be able to overcome this pandemic together ultimately.

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About MITI

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