

Address

by

*Dr Samlee Plianbangchang
Regional Director, WHO/SEARO*

at the

*Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of
Understanding between WHO/SEARO and
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische
Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH*

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the World Health Organization and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische
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Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Representatives of GTZ,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to welcome you all to this brief ceremony of signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, GTZ.

This is yet another step towards strengthening our partnerships with the international community to work together for better health in South-East Asia Region.

Actually, the collaboration between WHO and GTZ is not new.

GTZ has long been a WHO collaborating centre for Health System Development and actively cooperates with WHO at global, regional and country levels.

As far as the WHO South-East Asia Region is concerned, I am sure, the long-standing partnership between the two agencies will now be expanded and strengthened through this Memorandum of Understanding, which is a formal framework for collaboration.

As we are aware, the South-East Asia Region is home to 25 percent of the world's population and bears a very high burden of global diseases.

To tackle many formidable health challenges, for health for all in all countries, there is a need for concerted efforts by the international community.

I am, therefore, very pleased that we are entering into a formal arrangement with GTZ, who has already been involved in a number of health development activities in several Member States of our Region.

These activities range from district health systems development and management to human resource development, social mobilization, operational research, and development of health infrastructure.

In all these areas, GTZ has either directly supported WHO activities or supplemented our efforts to meet health needs of our Member States.

As the international community moves towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, it is indeed an opportune time to further strengthen partnership to respond more effectively to the needs of our Member States.

The MoU identifies several potential areas of collaboration. These include:

- Health sector reform and decentralization;
- Fair financing of health care and social health insurance;
- Human resources development and management;
- Strengthening of public health education and practices;
- Quality management in health care;
- Sexual and reproductive health;
- HIV/AIDS;
- Prevention of drug abuse;
- Health of children and young adults; and
- Health Promotion and environmental health.

Our joint efforts will focus on country-level operations. Under this MoU, country representatives of the two agencies will define the cooperation goals and activities for implementation, and provide reports on the progress, through a Joint Coordination Group.

We see the signing of this MoU as another milestone in the long-standing partnership between the two agencies.

I am sure that our renewed efforts will help accelerate health development in South-East Asia.

I very much look forward to the fruitful results of our joint cooperation in the years to come.

Thank you.