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The Role of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community in Overcoming the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is described as circumstances often interchangeably in social and medical contexts as non-boundary spread and directly affected a wide range of human life and a non-traditional security threat. The pandemic has had adverse consequences on the economy, and health and psychology have suffered. In 2020, ASEAN held an extraordinary summit on COVID-19 to accelerate resilience to the pandemic as a regional response; however, a solid commitment and comprehensive foundation are critical focal points for dealing with infectious diseases. Therefore, ASEAN member states should create a permanent mechanism to deal with current and future pandemics by providing a strategic long-term plan, an annual work plan, effective monitoring systems, and quality assurance by strengthening the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community's role as an open and dynamic entity within the ASEAN Community. Doctrinal research based on normative legal and conceptual approaches was conducted as methods for this study.

Keywords: Covid-19; Pandemic; ASEAN; Regionalism; ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

Introduction

The coronavirus (COVs) or novel β coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a global pandemic disease.¹ Pandemic describes as circumstances often interchangeably social and medical contexts historically by an epidemiologist.² In the modern approach, pandemics spread across

¹ World Health Organization (WHO), 'WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19', *WHO* (2020) <<https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19-11-march-2020>>. accessed 10 June 2021.

² JM Last, *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*. [3], See Also David M. Morens, Gregory K. Folkers, Anthony S. Fauci, 'What Is a Pandemic?', (2009), *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 200, Issue 7, October, 1018–1021 (Oxford University Press, 2nd ed, 1988).[1018].

boundaries and directly affect a wide range of human lives.³ As a response, states have taken various options and strategies to overcome and control the global outbreak. Nevertheless, a commonality across the different approaches is the enforcement of movement restrictions. Restrictions vary in many ways depending on national policy, including border closures, community lockdowns, travel restrictions, or other limitations that control people's movements. The adverse consequences of movement restriction cause the economy as well as people's health and psychology to suffer. Meanwhile, some industries will slow down or possibly collapse soon.

The WHO and the USA's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define a pandemic as an unpredictable phenomenon that is potentially widespread from person to person in every country over specific periods from months to a year.⁴ As Morens highlighted, there are seven critical criteria that must be satisfied for a virus outbreak to be considered a pandemic: a wide area of extension and virus movement, spread rates, low population immunity, novelty, infectiousness, contagiousness, and severity.⁵ Since 2020, the pandemic has also been recognized as a non-traditional threat to national security and human well-being.⁶ ASEAN countries have also faced the challenge; in April 2020, a special summit on COVID-19 was held to reaffirm the ASEAN commitment to overcoming the pandemic's effects.⁷ The summit imposed and promoted cooperation and sharing on health, knowledge, research, vaccines, medicine, and another relevant aspects. Then, technical guidance based on the summit was established to implement the summit declaration, including the ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination System and the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies.

³ Miquel Pontá, *A Dictionary of Epidemiology* (Oxford University Press, 6th ed, 2014).[209].

⁴ WHO Global Influenza Programme & World Health Organization, 'WHO Global Influenza Programme & World Health Organization. Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response: A WHO Guidance Document. [6] See Also Peter Doshi, "The Elusive Definition of Pandemic Influenza." (2011). *Bulletin*, *World Health Organization* (2009).[533].

⁵ Anthony S Fauci David M. Morens, Gregory K. Folkers, 'What Is a Pandemic?' (2009) 200(7) *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*. [1019-1020].

⁶ S. Saha, S Chakrabarti, 'The Non-Traditional Security Threat of COVID-19 in South Asia: An Analysis of the Indian and Chinese Leverage in Health Diplomacy' (2021) 28(1) *South Asian Survey* [111-132].

⁷ Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) 2019.

ASEAN members chose similar strategies for dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak in implementing movement restriction and social distancing.⁸ Even though the states' elaborate the strategies, it is found slightly different, particularly in the period length and intensity due to their national policy. The ASEAN special summit on COVID-19 was also a regional strategy to accelerate resilience to the pandemic. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) is one of the pillars of the organization recognized as an open and dynamic entity that focuses on regarding education, health, children, women, and labour sectors for ASEAN citizens. There are four critical elements of ASCC: to promote a people-oriented community, to concern the social impact of economic integration, to enhance environmental sustainability, and to strengthen the foundation of regional social cohesion.⁹

This paper aims to identify the factors that can be used permanently to deal with the pandemic. The measures taken now can be regarded as a transient response. The study reviews the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in ASEAN countries, then examines the response from a regional perspective and the ASCC role of the occurrence in the region. It also assesses what has been done over the two years of the pandemic by shared situational awareness that reflects ASEAN as a people-oriented organization.

Doctrinal research based on normative legal and conceptual approaches was conducted for this study. Despite the merits of these approaches, this article opts for different theories and doctrines that reflect the role of ASEAN as an intergovernmental and people-oriented organization in its efforts to eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's primary data comes from legal documents such as treaties, international agreements, acts, case law, and court opinions that are relevant to the topic. Secondary data was collected from the literature, including

⁸ Shafiah F Muhibat, 'COVID-19 in Southeast Asia: 10 Countries, 10 Responses, (2020) CSIS Commentaries, DMRU-051-EN, <<https://www.Csis.or.Id/Publications/COVID-19-in-South-east-Asia-10-Countries-10-Responses/>> Accessed 15 July 2021; See Also P. J. Morgan , and L. Q. Trinh. Im' P. J. Morgan, and L. Q. Trinh. *Impacts of COVID-19 on Households in ASEAN Countries and Their Implications for Human Capital Development*. (ADB Working Paper 1226, Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute, 2021).[3].

⁹ *ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Plan of Action and Blueprint 2025*.

books, national and international journals, and other academic information in relevant issues of the articles. There were no time constraints on the date of the secondary material; however, the newest information took precedence.

The research examined the regional response to the pandemic. First, it assessed a two-year pandemic by shared situational awareness, which showed ASEAN to be a people-oriented organization. The next step was to analyse the dynamic role of ASCC and its legal framework, strategies, and implementation of the ASEAN health regional mechanism. By strengthening the ASCC's role and other possible international cooperation and coordination public health emergency system.

Infectious Diseases as Non-Traditional Security Threats

Non-traditional threats are defined as challenging circumstances caused by non-state actors¹⁰ and non-military sources.¹¹ In contrast, traditional security threats are defined as impositions on national sovereignty and the use of force.¹² While non-traditional security is widely interpreted as being related to 'human security'.¹³ Some dimensions of NTS need to be considered: military, politics, economy, environment, and social.¹⁴ On the other hand, the Consortium on Non-Traditional Security in Asia, as highlighted by Caballero-Anthony, determines the type of NTS to be trans-national crime, environment, illegal migration, energy, and human security.¹⁵

¹⁰ Pennisi di Floristella, 'Are Non-Traditional Security Challenges Leading Regional Organizations Towards Greater Convergence? [11]. See Also Marthand Jha. "Does Non-Traditional Security Threats Need to Be Re-Defined" (2017), Indian Defense Review. 17 April, <<http://www.Indiandefencerevi>> (2013) 11 *Asia Europe Journal*. [23].

¹¹ Stephen Blankm Younkyoo Kim, 'Non-Traditional Security (NTS) in Central Asia: Contending Paradigms and Current Perspectives' (2012) 10 (1) *The Korean Journal of International Studies*. [124].

¹² Nihas PS, 'Non-Traditional Security Threat and National Security' (2020) 07 (07) *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*. [5900].

¹³ Paul M Evans, 'Human Security and East Asia: In the Beginning' (2004) 4 (2) *Journal of East Asian Studies*. [263]. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23417916>>.

¹⁴ Buzan, Wæver, O., Wæver, O., & De Wilde, J, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998). [28]

¹⁵ M. Caballero-Anthony, M., Emmers, R. Acharya, A. *Studying Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Trends and Issues* (Marshall Cavendish, 2006).

Aside from conventional national security characteristics relating to sovereignty, territory, and military threats,¹⁶ NTS established a new approach to dealing with threats that are non-military in nature.¹⁷ NTS defined emergency circumstances as arising from non-military causes, such as natural disasters, food scarcity, human and drug trafficking, slavery, climate change, and infectious disease. In contrast, it will endanger people's wellbeing¹⁸. There are five main characters of NTS provided by Desker;¹⁹ however, based on the nature of the NTS, it could also be divided into three main approaches: scope, impact, and response. The content of activities regarding the NTS should be transnational in character.²⁰ In comparison, the effects of the NTS threat cannot be prevented entirely by states due to the rapid spread of the disease. Furthermore, the state shall respond to and address the situation by strengthening regional and multilateral cooperation because the municipal act of the state is no longer sufficient to address the problem.²¹

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global infectious threat and an unconventional security concern, particularly in southeast Asia.²² The significant impact of the disease outbreak imposes a threat to human life, socio-economic balance, community behaviour, and the uncertain future to come.

Impact of COVID-19 for ASEAN

In total, the ASEAN population is estimated at approximately 661.5 million people.²³ ASEAN is regarded as the third most populous region worldwide, and it

¹⁶ Andrea Haefner, *Non-Traditional Security: The Case of Environmental Challenges in the Mekong Subregion July/August*, "...National Security Defined as Protection of the State's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity from External Mil (Pacific Geographies, 2013).

¹⁷ M. Caballero-Anthony, M., Emmers (n 15).

¹⁸ Rashila Ramli, [*et.al*], 'Towards a Modified Approach to Human Security in Southeast Asia - A Perspective from Bangi' (2020) 20(3) *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum.*

¹⁹ Barry Desker, *New Approaches to Security: Non Traditional Security Challenges*. BRIDEX Working Paper Seminar (2022).

²⁰ Zarina Othman, [*et.al.*], 'Non-Traditional Security Issues and the Stability of Southeast Asia' (2013) 4(2) *Jurnal Kajian Wilayah*. [153].

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Mely Caballero-Anthony, 'Non-Traditional Security and Infectious Diseases in ASEAN: Going beyond the Rhetoric of Securitization to Deeper Institutionalization' (2008) 21 (4) *The Pacific Review*. [508].

²³ Aaron O'Neill, 'Total Population of the ASEAN Countries from 2011 to 2021', *Statistica* (2021) <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/796222/total-population-of-the-asean-countries/>>.

has the fourth-largest economy after China, the USA, and India. As expected, the COVID outbreak created a crash and crisis in the global economy within a year. According to data from World Bank, the pandemic caused the annual international GDP resilience to plummet beyond the limit on (minus) -3.59% in 2020.²⁴ Despite ASEAN's rapid economic growth, the GDP disparity among its members could create structural problems in facing emergency circumstances such as disease outbreaks, which has been proven in how ASEAN members have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the national health sector and economics, since ASEAN member states have applied massive restrictions and physical distancing to prevent virus transmission. Viral transmission occurs among humans in a widespread and rapid manner. The virus has infected more than 7 million people in the ASEAN region, with a death toll of more than 147 thousand people from its first detection in late 2019 through the end of July 2021.²⁵

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the ten members of ASEAN shared similar standard features of fast economic growth as presented by Asian Development Bank in 2019 (Figure 1). However, during COVID-19, the ten members each experienced an economic slowdown, which is reflected in their GDP's plunge into negative growth as seen in Figure 2. Moreover, slow trade recovery became inevitable for ASEAN²⁶ when China and the USA, the top two trading partners of ASEAN countries, experienced a similarly challenging situation. On the other hand, trade among ASEAN members only contributes 25% in total,²⁷ Therefore, it is difficult to quickly achieve a rebounding regional economy by increasing business with either internal or external trade partners.

²⁴ World Bank, *GDP Growth (Annual %) 2020* (2021).

²⁵ Wordometer Report, *Coronavirus Cases* (2021) <<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>>.

²⁶ UNCTAD Report, *Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development Transitioning to a New Normal* (2021) <UNCTAD/OSG/2020/1>.

²⁷ Cornelia Yip Terence Tai Leung Chong, Xiaoyang Li, 'The Impact of COVID-19 on ASEAN' [2020] *Economic and Political Studies*. [3].



Figure 1. ASEAN GDP growth 2019²⁸



Figure 2. ASEAN GDP growth in 2020²⁹

ASEAN and AMC Response to COVID-19

A fast and effective response is required for dealing with the rapidly evolving pandemic. The main threat of the outbreak is that humanity has been repeatedly endangered. Therefore, states have imposed a variety of actions to mitigate and prevent the virus both during and after the infection's spread. The data show that at the end of July 2021, the confirmed cases in the region shared 3.4%³⁰ and 3.5%³¹ for mortality rate on the global number at 198 million COVID-19 cases,³² Therefore, the mitigation response stipulated an obligation to care for their citizens by providing a reasonable degree of planning and treatment.³³

There are two types of responses to deal with the pandemic that affected ASEAN members: regional responses and national measures. On an individual basis, each AMC promotes different reactions in the face of the spreading viral infection. Each ASEAN country takes four main types of action to deal with the pandemic internally: national lockdown, local lockdown, massive rapid testing,

²⁸ 'Asian Development Bank (ADB)' (2019) <<https://theaseanpost.com/article/asean-growth-slower-forecasted>>.

²⁹ World Bank (n 24).

³⁰ Wordometer Report (n 25).

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ Timo Koivurova, "Due Diligence" at "Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law" See Also Antonia Coco. "Prevent, Respond, Cooperate States" Due Diligence Duties Vis-À-Vis the Covid-19 Pandemic' (2020), Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies [11]. 34 <opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1034?prd=EPIL>.

and social distancing.³⁴ Domestic measures taken by the government are mainly based on a national strategy to minimize the impact of the threat. However, the AMS considered a lockdown policy at a federal or local level to stop the pandemic in a short time so that economic growth could continue.³⁵ On the other hand, for instance, the Indonesian government decided to implement massive rapid testing and social distancing methods with less movement restriction to maintain economic stability.³⁶

In terms of regional economic response, ASEAN continues prioritize maintaining trade and investment. This is seen in ASEAN's securing of regional supply chains with external partners using a non-tariff barrier policy to avoid unnecessary chaos.³⁷ ASEAN's health response to the COVID-19 pandemic is shown in the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019, which was signed by the head of state AMC. In 2021, ASEAN established the Public Health Emergency Coordination System, ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies, and the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund³⁸ as the standard operating procedures for public health emergencies, as mandated by the COVID-19 special declaration. By the cooperation, share technical expertise and resources, including logistical management for sharing medical supplies. The mechanism enables the ASEAN states to prepare for and respond collectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and future public health emergencies and to mitigate future outbreaks.³⁹

³⁴ L Y Arnakim, T M Kibtiah, 'Response of ASEAN Member States to the Spread of COVID-19 in Southeast Asia' in *IOP Conf. Ser.: Earth Environ. Sci.* (2021).[1-7].

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ National Development Planning Agency of Indonesia, *Studi Pembelajaran Penanganan Covid-19 Di Indonesia, See Also CNBC Indonesia, Teriak Lockdown? Awas, Chaos Bisa Terjadi Jika RI Tidak Siap* (2021).

³⁷ ASEAN, 'Strengthening ASEAN'S Economic Resilience in Response to The Outbreak of The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)', *ASEAN.org* (2020) <<https://asean.org/strengthening-aseans-economic-resilience-in-response-to-the-outbreak-of-the-coronavirus-disease-covid-19/%3E> Accessed April 29 2021>.

³⁸ Lidya Christin Sinaga, 'ASEAN Dan Solidaritas Regional Menghadapi COVID-19'. See Also Dewa Gede Sudika Mangku. "Cooperation Between Asean Member States In Handling Covid-19 In The Southeast Asia Region", (2021), Ju', *LIPi* (2021) <<http://www.politik.lipi.go.id/kolom/kolom-1/politik-internasional/1359-asean-dan-solidaritas-regional-menghadapi-covid-19>>.

³⁹ *ibid.*

ASEAN as an Intergovernmental and People-Oriented Organization

ASEAN is an intergovernmental organization that was established based on the principles of “sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, consensus and unity in diversity,” as indicated in the preamble to the 2007 ASEAN charter,⁴⁰ For this reason, ASEAN is recognized as a state-centric organization despite strong criticisms from ASEAN members and external states⁴¹. Consequently, the principle of non-interference in the regional organization takes precedence and limits political connectivity among ASEAN states. External actors contribute a significant role in organizational policy.⁴²

The ASEAN character, as reflected in the terms “ASEAN way” or “one southeast Asia,” serves as a community-building idea of collective identity for constructing, promoting, and sustaining at designated to enclosed geographical region,⁴³ The changes from the old ASEAN paradigm to the new people-centred organization began when the ASEAN Human Rights Commission, then known as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), was established. ICHR created a new image of ASEAN as a people-centred organization that balances individual and state right.⁴⁴ Hereafter, under ICHR, the decision-making process should consider civil society and groups of people's points of view.

The Urgency of Regional Cooperation on COVID-19

Logical strategy established duty to care or state due diligence besides internal mitigation mechanism is the extent to international level by cooperation. Regarding

⁴⁰ Preamble the ASEAN Charter 2007, See Also M Davies. ‘Important but De-Centred: ASEAN’s Role in the Southeast Asian Human Rights Space’. (2016), *TRaNS: Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 5 No. 01 Doi:10.1017/Trn.2016.27. [101] 2007.

⁴¹ Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani, Abubakar Eby Hara, ‘ASEAN Paradigm Shift from a State to People-Oriented Organization: A Neo -Communitarian Perspective’ (2013) 14 *Japanese Journal of Political Science* [380].

⁴² M Faishal Aminuddin, Joko Purnomo, ‘Redefining ASEAN Way: Democratization and Intergovernmental Relations in Southeast Asia’ (2017) 5 *Journal of ASEAN Studies* [33] <10.21512/jas.v5i1.962.>.

⁴³ Bahar Rumelili, *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁴⁴ H Yoshimatsu, ‘Collective Action Problems and Regional Integration in ASEAN Contemporary Southeast Asia’ (2006) 1(28) *Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* [115-140].

the public health issue, under article 44 IHR (International Health Regulation) and customary international law stated by article 15 and 11 International Law Commission (ILC) Draft on Disaster, cooperation and seek assistance among stated strongly required. Similarly, in COVID-19 circumstances where international cooperation is necessary for health crisis framework to protect human wellbeing.⁴⁵ The pandemic emphasises the urgency to justify and, like a wake-up call, to find new ways and mechanisms of cooperating to tackle the upcoming public health threat.

A primary consideration of the cooperation idea is on a regional basis, followed by a broader scope of cooperation with the international community. Regional alliances determine balance and empower all members, posing internal and external threats to the region.⁴⁶ ASEAN refers to dominant regionalism in Southeast Asia. Therefore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN's response could be seen to describe how the ten members dealt with the outbreak virus. In terms of the pandemic, although regional responses of ASEAN had already been taken seriously to anticipate its impacts, as shown by the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 in 2020, the national response still plays a significant role in defeating the virus. Unilateral action applied at the national level by the government considering their respective domestic interests based on the outbreak's status. This strategy proved effective in controlling the spread of infection at the national level⁴⁷ and in saving human lives, despite the economic loss suffered by the state due to the action.

ASEAN held the Special ASEAN Summit by video conference on April 14 2020 and created the "Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019." There are seven critical measures in order. These measures include 1) strengthening public health cooperation measures to contain the pandemic and

⁴⁵ Norihiro Kokudo, Haruhito Sugiyama, 'Call for International Cooperation and Collaboration to Effectively Tackle the COVID-19 Pandemic' (2020) 2(2) *Global Health & Medicine* [61].

⁴⁶ Tanja A. Börzel, *Theorizing Regionalism: Cooperation, Integration, and Governance* at Tanja A. Börzel, Thomas Risse, *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2016).[128-129].

⁴⁷ Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani (n 41).

protect people; 2) protecting the nationals of ASEAN member states affected by the pandemic; 3) strengthening public communication and the importance of efforts to reduce stigmatization and discrimination; 4) reaffirming the commitment to take collective action and coordinated policies to mitigate the economic and social impacts of the pandemic; 5) taking a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder, and multi-sectoral approach by ASEAN to effectively respond to COVID-19 and future public health emergencies; 6) ensuring supply chain connectivity that provides for trade to continue for the smooth flow of essential goods; and 7) supporting the reallocation of available funds to support the establishment of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.⁴⁸

The Role of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

ASEAN will refer in case of cooperation due to the early establishment of the health security sector by Ministerial Meeting, Kuala Lumpur in 1980. Therefore, during a COVID-19 outbreak, many viewed the region as an example. Moreover, in the case of previous pandemics like SARS, H1N1, and MERS-CoV, also address by ASEAN entirely satisfactory. The idea of collaboration in the early 1980s developed onto the concept of the ASEAN Community with the three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

ASCC is one of three pillars of the ASEAN Community designed to represent ASEAN people's social and cultural interests. At the same time, the region is moving into economic integration and globalisation. The community's role is to promote across ASEAN a high quality of life, equal rights and access, human rights, social and economic welfare, health, disasters, and climate change. The ASCC is known as the most adaptive institution on the ASEAN pillars due to its regional and international relations. The ASCC set up the commitment of ASEAN as a people-oriented organization that identified humans as subjects, not as objects. There are four critical elements of ASCC: promoting a people-oriented community, concern for

⁴⁸ L Y Arnakim (n 34).

the social impact of economic integration, enhancing environmental sustainability, and strengthening the foundation of regional social cohesion.⁴⁹

Under the ASCC framework, there are some collaborations across the health sector to deal with COVID-19, namely the ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination System and the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies. Health Ministers and ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers and ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting for Health Development (APT SOMHD), the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre Network for public health emergencies (ASEAN EOC Network), and ASEAN Bio-Diaspora Virtual Centre for big data analytics and visualization (ABVC). ASEAN's long journey in dealing with the virus outbreak can be seen as a laboratory illustrating how to strengthen international or regional cooperation instruments to tackle the public health hazard.

The ASCC can be considered an agency that initiated regional cooperation for NTS, including health security. Therefore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ASCC should urge the ten member states to establish permanent mechanisms for current and future pandemic situations. To establish the collaboration, a strong political will among AMC is a critical requirement for ensuring a successful long-term collaboration. Therefore, they must develop an understanding of shared responsibility on transparency, accountability, trust, and fairness of the institution. Thus, a strategic long-term plan, annual work plan, effective monitoring system, and quality assurance⁵⁰ need to be created due to the establishment of ASCC to face future disastrous health circumstances in the region.

Conclusion

COVID-19 is defined as a global infectious threat that has been demonstrated to be an unconventional security concern, particularly in southeast Asia. The

⁴⁹ Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

⁵⁰ Jerry Indrawan 'ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Plan of Action and Blueprint, 2025, See Also Sumbal Javed, Vijay Kumar Chattu. 'Strengthening the COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Global Leadership, and International Cooperation through Global Health Diplomacy. (2020), Health P' (2020) 10(4) 300.

significant impact of the disease outbreak imposes a threat to human life, socio-economic balance, community behaviour, and the uncertain future to come. Dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak, ASEAN and its ten members set up two types of response, regional and national measures. On a national level, AMC established different responses to handle the spread of the virus. There are four types of action for dealing with the pandemic internally: national lockdown, local lockdown, massive rapid testing, and social distancing. On the other hand, the regional response of ASEAN remains to prioritise secure regional health and stability according to the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019, which was signed by the head of state AMC. The new approach to ASEAN regionalism on regional health mechanisms, especially on ASEAN ASCC. In terms of strengthening ASCC, AMC should create a permanent mechanism for pandemic management by providing a strategic long-term plan, annual work plan, effective monitoring system, and quality assurance. Consequently, the community affirms ASEAN member states' collaboration by intensifying multi-sectoral cooperation and cultivating regional governance of ASEAN as a rule-based organization as inherent in the ASEAN Charter 2008.

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