

Press Release

Ceremony to Mark the Japan-ASEAN Initiative to Combat Pandemic Influenza

On May 2, 2006, a ceremony to mark the Japan-ASEAN Initiative to combat Pandemic Influenza was held in Jakarta. At the ceremony, H.E. Mr. Mitoji Yabunaka, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, presented the list of goods to be procured for the early containment of pandemic influenza to H.E. Mr. Ong Keng Yong, Secretary General of ASEAN. Altogether 500,000 courses of Tamiflu and 700,000 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) will be stockpiled in Singapore under this project.

This project was based on an initiative unveiled by Prime Minister Koizumi at the last ASEAN-Japan Summit meeting held in December 2005. At the meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi announced that he will help ASEAN integration and that he will contribute 7.5 billion yen (70.1 million US dollars) to ASEAN which should include a project of stockpile against potential pandemic influenza.

Based on his initiative, a new fund, the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) was officially established on March 27, 2006. This project of stockpile is the first project under the new Fund. The ceremony was held to officially launch the project as the first batch of stockpile of Tamiflu and PPE has been stockpiled in a warehouse of Singapore. The entire stockpile will be completed within a few months.

Also, a seminar was held after the ceremony to a wide range of audience including health officials from ASEAN countries, where an expert from WHO Western Pacific Regional Coordination Office briefed on the most effective use of the stockpile of Tamiflu and PPE in the case of an outbreak of pandemic influenza.