

International Trade and Health [ITH] Conference 2018 “Belt and Road Initiative: Opportunities and Challenges for Health”

15-16 November 2018

Chaophraya Ballroom, Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort,
Charoennakorn Road, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a long term strategy announced by Xi Jinping, the President of China, to boost the region’s economic development. The BRI aims to enhance trade, infrastructure and connectivity through building networks of railways, highways, bridges, airports, ports, oils and gas pipelines and fibre optics. The concept originated from China’s ancient Silk Road that was once used to facilitate trade and cultural exchanges. The BRI aims to link China to Asia and Europe consisting of two important strategies: (1) the Silk Road Economic Belt – the land route connecting China with Central Asia, Eastern and Western Europe; and (2) the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road – the sea route connecting China to South East Asia, Africa and Central Asia.

The BRI involves over 60 countries and provides an opportunity for the global north to connect with the global south through an economic security platform. China has planned \$1 trillion investment, including the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to provide loans to the BRI countries including ASEAN countries.

The BRI is emerging as one of China’s major vehicle for its increasing role in international engagement, with an important health dimension. Within it includes important health dimensions, for instance; international collaboration in several health issues, emergency response and medical assistance, science and technological advancement.

In August 2017 China organized the first biennial Belt and Road High Level Meeting on Health Cooperation towards Healthy Silk Road where more than 30 health ministers and leaders of multilateral agencies signed the Beijing Communiqué. The Communiqué highlighted the joint commitment to protect public health and strengthen people-to-people exchanges among BRI countries.

However, there have been a number of concerns related to the potential impacts of the BRI on health such as spread of infectious diseases due to increased people mobility; the geological, socio-economic and health impacts of large infrastructure projects; transboundary movement of hazardous materials; and regulation of occupational health and environmental standards.

BRI is therefore an initiative that expands beyond trade and investment. The opportunities and challenges faced prevail beyond its mere trading system. Hence, there is the crucial need to understand these positive and negative implications, mainly to maximize for greater opportunities while mitigating its negative impacts for the benefits of the society at large.

The International Trade and Health Conference 2018 will bring experts and participants from various groups to discuss the BRI in detail and its implication on health and health systems locally, regionally

and globally. The conference will provide state of the art of the Belt and Road Initiative and policy recommendations as well as promote collaboration among participating agencies and will foster further research on BRI and health innovation.

Objectives

1. To exchange knowledge and understanding on the Belt and Road Initiative and its impacts beyond trade in Thailand as well as regionally and globally
2. To discuss and identify potential research topics and collaboration among concerned agencies
3. To develop evidence-based policy recommendations on the Belt and Road Initiative and health

Dates: 15-16 November 2018

Venue: Chaophraya Ballroom, Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort, Charoennakorn Road, Bangkok

Participants

Approximately 150 persons (by invitation) including

1. Thai Government officials from relevant agencies
2. Academic researchers
3. University students
4. Civil society representatives
5. Representatives from the private sector (*except the tobacco and alcoholic beverage industries*)
6. International experts
7. Representatives from funding agencies of the ITH Programme
8. Media
9. Participants from China and ASEAN countries
10. Embassy of BRI countries in Bangkok and embassy of other countries

Expected outcomes

1. Knowledge generation and sharing
2. Professional exchanges leading to joint research and collaboration
3. Policy recommendations for policy makers related to BRI and health
4. Expanded network and collaboration on international trade and health

Co-hosts

1. International Trade and Health Programme (ITH)
2. National Commission on International Trade and Health Studies (NCITHS)
3. ITH Funders (MOPH, ThaiHealth Promotion Foundation, WHO, NHCO, NHSO, HSRI)

Language_ Thai and English (with simultaneous interpretation services provided)

Conference programme

Day 1: Thursday 15 November 2018	
08.00-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.45	Opening Remarks - Dr Liviu Vedrasco, WHO Thailand Country Office - Mrs Sirina Pavarolavidya, Chair of National Commission on International Trade and Health Studies (NCITHS)
	Keynote Speech “Thailand and the Belt and Road – Dos and Don’ts” Dr Somkiat Tangkitvanich President of Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)
09.45-11.00	<u>Session 1</u> Belt and Road Initiative and Its Implications Beyond Trade This session sets the scene for the conference. The panel will discuss overall issues of the BRI, including what is the Belt and Road Initiative, the scope of BRI and its implications on trade and matters beyond trade (economic, geo-politic, security, social, and development). Speakers - Prof Prapat Thepchatree, Director, Centre for ASEAN Studies, Thammasat University - Assoc Prof Sompong Sirisoponsilp, Deputy Dean, School of Agricultural Resources, Chulalongkorn University - Assistant Prof Pramual Suteecharuwat, Department of Industrial Engineering, Chulalongkorn University Moderator: Pol. Maj. Suriwan Thaiprayoon, Global Health Division, MOPH Session Coordinator: International Trade and Health (ITH) Programme
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.30	<u>Session 2</u> Belt and Road Initiative and Trade and investment This session focuses on the implications of BRI on investment (value, gain, loss, type of industry, investment sector), policy actions needed to address the challenges, investor protection, and recommendations for future research as well as policy recommendations. Lead Speaker: - Dr Piti Srisangnam, Director, Centre for International Economics, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University Panelists: - Professor Prabir De, Director, ASEAN-India Center, Research and Information System for Developing Countries - Dr Li Renliang, School of Social and Environmental Development, NIDA Moderator: Ms Kannikar Kijtiwatchakul, FTA Watch Session Coordinator: International Trade and Health (ITH) Programme
12.30-13.30	Lunch

13.30-14.45	<p><u>Session 3</u></p> <p>Belt and Road Initiative – Opportunities and Challenges to Global Health</p> <p>BRI has become the China’s major vehicle for international engagement, with increasing health dimension. The 2017 Beijing Communiqué aimed at protecting public health and strengthening people-to-people exchanges among BRI countries and was signed by more than 30 health ministers and leaders of international organizations. This session will explore BRI and global health impact, its advantages and disadvantages to the global health community</p> <p>Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistant Prof Tang Kun, Department of Global Health, Peking University, China <p>Panelist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof Kenji Shibuya, Professor and Chair, Department of Global Health Policy, Graduate School of Medicine, The University of Tokyo, Japan - Dr Manisha Shridhar, Regional Advisor, WHO/SEARO - Mrs Benjaporn Fattier, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand <p>Moderator: Dr Liviu Vedrasco, Programme Officer, WHO Thailand Country Office</p> <p>Session Coordinator: Dr Manisha Shridhar, Regional Advisor, WHO/SEARO</p>
14.45-15.00	Coffee break
15.00-16.15	<p><u>Session 4</u></p> <p>Belt and Road Initiative – Opportunity or Threat to the UHC</p> <p>This Session aims to discuss on the impacts of BRI on health systems focusing on how and to what extent the BRI will contribute to UHC or health systems strengthening in the BRI countries and the global community.</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Sarah Louise Barber, Director, WHO Kobe Center, Japan <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Fan Xiaodan, China National Health Development Research Center - Dr Sutayut Osornprasop, Senior Human Development Specialist, World Bank - Dr Bounpheng Philavong, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR <p>Moderator: Dr Azusa Sato, Health Specialist, Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank</p> <p>Session Coordinator: Pol. Maj. Suriwan Thaiprayoon, Global Health Division, Ministry of Public Health</p>
16.15-16.45	Wrap up for Day 1

Day 2: Friday 16 November 2018	
08.00-09.00	Registration
09.00-10.15	<p><u>Session 5</u></p> <p>Belt and Road Initiative and Public Health Emergencies / Health Security</p> <p>This session focuses on the current and potential impacts of the Belt and Road on health security and discusses whether the BR Blueprint contributes to health security. The session also explores to what extent the BRI can support preparedness and improvement of capacity needed for public health emergencies responses.</p> <p>Lead Speaker: Dr Roderico Ofrin, Regional Emergency Director, WHOSEARO</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Dennis Carroll, Director Emerging Threats Program, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) - Ms Riko Kimoto, Project Manager, Sustainable Development & Public Health, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) <p>Moderator: Dr Kumnuan Ungchusak, Consultant to Department of Disease Control, MOPH</p> <p>Session Coordinator: Dr Nakorn Prem Sri, Director of Bureau of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, MOPH</p>
10.15-10.30	Coffee break
10.30-11.45	<p><u>Session 6</u></p> <p>BRI and Health Innovation and Research Collaboration</p> <p>This session aims to discuss the opportunity to identify potential innovation benefiting health system development and the obstacles to countries and through bilateral development with China. This session also explores to potential research questions and potential research collaboration.</p> <p>Lead speaker</p> <p>Dr Nares Damrongchai, CEO, Thailand Center of Excellence for Life Sciences (Public Organization)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Vitoon Vonghangool, President, BioNet-Asia Co., Ltd. Thailand - Dr Yada Mukdapitak, Deputy Secretary General, National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Office, Thailand - Prof. Dr. Lin Wang, Institute of Biomedical and Health Engineering, Shenzhen Institutes of Advanced Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences <p>Moderator: Dr Chutima Akalephan, International Trade and Health Programme, IHPP</p> <p>Session Coordinator: Mrs Premruedee Lertsakvimarn, Senior Manager, International Cooperation, Thailand Center of Excellence for Life Sciences (Public Organization)</p>

11.45-12.15	<p>Recommendations from the conference</p> <p>By Dr Cha-aim Pachanee, Programme Manager, International Trade and Health Programme, International Health Policy Program (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health</p>
12.15-12.45	<p>Conclusion and the way forward</p> <p>By Dr Suwit Wibulpolprasert, Chair of the ITH Conference Organising Subcommittee</p>
12.45-12.50	<p>Closing</p> <p>By Mrs Sirina Pavarolavidya, Chair of National Commission on International Trade and Health Studies (NCITHS)</p>
12.50-14.00	Lunch