

15 December 2021

**Promotion of Sustainable Healthy Environment in COVID-19 Crisis**

The COVID-19 crisis has adversely affected health, environment, society and economy. The direction of public policy development requires systematic integration and leveraging a body of knowledge and innovation involved to waste management and sustainable tourism. The application of the Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model (BCG), healthy housing and urban development, building consciousness and new behaviors with a focus on participation and social accountability of all sectors shall result in a civil network that is well prepared to promote healthy environment and reach the sustainable development goals.

The Fourteenth National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on the promotion of sustainable healthy environment in COVID-19 crisis.<sup>1</sup>

**Realizing** that coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 is an emerging disease that has a tendency to be more concerned and cause wide-reaching impacts on health, the environment, society and economy, at individual, family, community and public level. It is considered a “health crisis” that has impacts towards health.<sup>2</sup>

**Acknowledging** about moving forward the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Health Assembly resolutions in 2009 on “Emerging Infectious Diseases” and on “All Sector Participatory Management of Hazardous Waste from Communities”; the 6<sup>th</sup> resolution in 2013 on “Multi-sectoral Collaboration for “One Health” of Humans, Animals and Environment”; the 9<sup>th</sup> resolution in 2016 on “Managing and Developing Healthy Community and Urban Housing”; the 10<sup>th</sup> resolution in 2017 on “Sustainable Participatory Community Waste Management”; and the 13<sup>th</sup> resolution in 2020 on “Participatory Health Crisis Management in case of Pandemics,” where certain of which have been executed to achieve the goals.

**Appreciating** the strength of Thai public health and collaboration of village health volunteers/Bangkok health volunteers, other volunteers and all sectors, whereby medical and public health personnel have been rigorously performing their duties to prevent, screen, transfer cases, rehabilitate all patients and remedy the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Concerning** that the environmental problems that occurred, both during COVID-19 and thereafter shall affect health, both directly and indirectly. Without plans, preparedness, effective and efficient actions taken since the beginning, such health problems will be accumulated and intensified respectively.

**Seeing** that the public policy on the “promotion of sustainable healthy environment in COVID-19 crisis” is aimed to empower the citizens to aware and encounter with the health crisis. The policy enables participation of all sectors to integrate and achieve sustainable

<sup>1</sup> NHA 14 / Main 1

<sup>2</sup> ‘Health’ means the state of human being which is perfect in physical, mental, spiritual and social aspects, all of which are holistic in balance. (Section 3, National Health Act, B.E. 2550 (A.D. 2007)). <https://infocenter.nationalhealth.or.th/node/28011>

development goals in terms of economy, society and the environment, and promotes the notion where “all people in Thailand are healthy” in accordance with the roadmap of the resolution.<sup>3</sup>

Hereby, adopts the following resolutions:

## **1. Sustainable waste management for healthy environment**

- 1.1 Requests the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Interior, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies to participate in the integration of planning and development of system and mechanism for sustainable waste management of all types that meet the required standards, starting from its source to the final disposal and in line with the COVID-19 situation; to develop environmentally friendly products and packaging; to motivate suppliers, distributors, entrepreneurs, transporters and consumers to adopt the principles of 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) by emphasizing on minimizing the excess quantity of waste at its source to zero and also considering to enhancing the roles of private sector in waste management.
- 1.2 Requests the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Interior, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies to expedite the elimination of some types of plastics, or single use plastics, to achieve the target set more rapidly<sup>4</sup>; to create and disseminate knowledge and innovation made from other materials instead of plastics; not to import plastic scraps and electronic waste from overseas; to reduce plastic-made packages and materials by entering into a mutual agreement with suppliers, distributors and delivery service providers of online goods or foods in order to reduce plastic waste generation.
- 1.3 Requests the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies to collaboratively and systemically manage all types of infectious waste, from the process of separation, discard, collection, aggregation, transport and disposal of such waste; to provide a manual regarding infectious waste management to ensure correct, safe and hygienic of waste generated by health facilities, field hospitals, communities, households and COVID-19 isolation centers, based on technical principles in order to avoid contamination in the environment and to minimize the spread of virus; to encourage the use of and develop cloth masks or masks made from other materials that meet the required standards to replace single-use masks.
- 1.4 Requests local governments and communities to take a role in systematically and accurately managing community waste based on technical principles, in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Interior, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies, by pushing forward to significant provincial agenda; to strengthen awareness and disseminate understandable knowledge through outreaching media; to encourage households to separate community waste to accurate categories and strictly complies with the 3R principle in order to minimize waste generation and cultivate more income from waste for the benefit of the community by using proper technology and mitigate pollution; to promote learning centers for community waste management and encourage expansion of such resources to other areas.

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<sup>3</sup> NHA 14 / Main 1 / Annex 1

<sup>4</sup> According to the 2018-2030 Plastic Waste Management Roadmap. <https://thaimsw.pcd.go.th/newsdetail.php?id=86>

## **2. Sustainable environmental management in tourist attractions**

- 2.1 Requests the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies to participate in the integration of planning and development of systems and mechanisms for tourism management of all types that are quality-oriented and value local livelihood in a sustainable manner and in line with the COVID-19 situation; disseminate knowledge, strengthen awareness and mutual accountability between agencies, communities, and tourists in conserving natural resources and minimizing environmental impacts to achieve sustainable development, in terms of the environment, economy, society and health, in a balanced manner.
- 2.2 Requests the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and involved agencies to support communities, local governments, private sector, educational institutions and stakeholders in conducting research on sustainable tourism and carrying capacity of each specific location in order to define a proper number of tourists that suits the area, activities and duration; to close attractions at certain times; to actively develop standards, criteria and manual for eco-friendly tourism; empower the communities to provide authentic community-based tourism; develop virtual tourism technology using electronic media.

## **3. Environmental management in the bio-circular-green economy development**

- 3.1 Requests the Executive Committee of Bio-Circular-Green Economy (BCG), government sector, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies to participate in integrating the planning and development of systems and mechanisms, and review the “2021-2026 BCG economic model development strategies”<sup>5</sup> to ensure it is in line with relevant master plans; adjust action plans to serve the COVID-19 crisis and outbreaks of other diseases by taking into account the balance of the environment, health, society, economy that corresponds to needs of people and contexts of the area; emphasize participation, starting from the process of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement for the promotion of BCG learning centers and drive the BCG model at the area level.
- 3.2 Requests the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and involved agencies to promote creation and dissemination of the body of knowledge, technology and innovation of BCG economic development; optimize resources that are biodegradable, recyclable and reduce pollution; motivate all parties to achieve the SDGs; encourage the industrial sector, enterprises, agricultural sector, tourism sector, transportation sector, energy sector and communities to employ the approach along with good governance; enhance the increase in number of innovators/businesses and low-carbon communities.

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<sup>5</sup> Adopting the BCG economic model as a national policy to drive Thailand.

<https://www.thaigov.go.th/news/contents/details/38369>

#### **4. Environmental management in healthy housing and urban development**

- 4.1 Requests the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and relevant agencies to participate in the integration of planning and development of systems and mechanisms for healthy housing and urban development by adhering to people-centric principles; develop communities, urban and rural areas to serve the ongoing problems, needs and the area contexts, and extends to all groups of populations; renovate and manage housing, communities and the environment to facilitate healthy life; develop reflexive and adaptive capacity to respond the outbreak of COVID-19 and those of other diseases, disasters and different risk factors.
- 4.2 Requests the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to encourage local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and relevant agencies to participate in developing healthy housing and urban development; adjust ways of living, transportation; promote businesses that enhance the identity of the community; engage in clean, hygienic, safe, toxic-free, disease-free work environment and activities, which mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and reduce waste generation; organize activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions; multiply green spaces; promote sustainable production and consumption and ensure self-reliance and good quality of life.

#### **5. Environmental management with the participation of civil networks to promote sustainable healthy environment**

- 5.1 Requests the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to encourage local governments, communities, private sector, educational institutions, and relevant agencies to jointly promote and establish mechanisms that engage participation and support implementation of groups/organizations / communities/assemblies/networks/children/youths/volunteers at the area level in terms of knowledge, media, resources, learning resources, budgets from different sources, tools, etc., in a rigorous and constant manner in order to consolidate as a strong civil network in promoting sustainable healthy environment and preparing for and adapting to changes, both during the COVID-19 crisis and in the post-pandemic era.
  - 5.2 Requests groups/organizations/assemblies/networks /children/youths/volunteers, government sector, local governments, private sector, communities, educational institutions, media, religious leaders, and involved agencies to be a member of a civil network that adheres to a common commitment using health assembly, health charter, or other appropriate mechanisms for raising awareness, accountability and fostering good behaviors in the society; enhance literacy and learning process; develop potential, skills and capacity; communicate to public, as well as participate in or implement different projects by applying the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to promote sustainable healthy environment; develop learning centers and extend them to other areas to achieve sustainable development.
6. Requests member of the National Health Assembly and all sectors to collaboratively drive this healthy public policy to their fullest potential based on the approaches, directions, process and involved agencies specified in the roadmap of resolution.

7. Requests the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to report progress of the resolution on Promotion of Sustainable Healthy Environment in COVID-19 Crisis to the 15<sup>th</sup> National Health Assembly.