

To Your Excellency
Dr. Endang Rahayu Sedyaningsih
Honourable Minister of Health, Indonesia

Your Excellency Dr. Endang,

We, the undersigned, would like to sincerely express our gratitude for your exemplary leadership in proposing and ensuring that the 63rd World Health Assembly accept the resolutions, especially the viral hepatitis resolution.

As you will also agree, given the fact that Hepatitis C (HCV) remains a hidden, unaddressed epidemic, the Viral hepatitis resolution represent the best interest of people directly affected by HCV, in particular networks of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and networks of people who inject drugs across the Asia and Pacific Region. This resolution has the potential to create significant impact in the incoming years and will save lives from this emerging disease.

As you might be aware, PLHIV and people who use drugs have had little access to prevention tools, testing and treatment for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in Indonesia and across the globe. Even worse is the situation of HIV and HCV co-infection, which makes HIV disease progress faster. For years now, we have been voicing our concerns and putting our best efforts forward to flag these issues. We continue, therefore, to beseech you to endorse this greater access as an urgent public health priority.

We are very grateful to see the government of Indonesia, in particular the Ministry of Health, taking the leadership on viral hepatitis; and in particular your leadership to establish a National Technical Plan for HCV prevention and treatment. Indonesia's HCV epidemic remains inadequately documented, urgent scale up of research efforts to assess its scope and guide appropriate responses is needed.

There are challenges to improving HCV treatment access, as well. Treatments remain largely unaffordable because of pharmaceutical pricing policies and patents on Pegylated interferon. The barriers to treatment are even higher for those socially and economically marginalized yet disproportionately affected – people living with HIV and people who inject drugs. We look forward to Indonesia's Ministry of Health continue to lead by helping to improve access to treatment.

We also would like to recognize JOTHI, the Indonesian national network of people living with HIV, for its tireless effort in raising awareness of viral hepatitis. We are aware that JOTHI has included HIV/HCV co-infection in its advocacy plan and, after the WHO resolution, increased HCV advocacy.

We are hoping that other countries in Asia and Pacific will join with the Indonesian Ministry of Health's vocal leadership in responding to the growing HCV epidemic. Again, we would like to say thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Signed:

1. Asia Pacific Network of PLHIV (APN+).
2. Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS (7 Sisters).
3. Asian Network of People who Use Drugs (ANPUD).
4. Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW).
5. International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC).
6. Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM).
7. World AIDS Campaign (WAC).
8. Persaudaraan Korban Napza Indonesia