

6th August 2018

Hon. Sir Dr. Puka Temu, KBE, CMG, MP

Minister of Health
Papua New Guinea

Dear Minister Temu,

On behalf of the APEC Business Advisory Council, I would like to express our strong support for the work within APEC to develop sustainable, high performing health systems and achieve the actions set out in the *Healthy Asia-Pacific 2020* and its *Roadmap*, and to realize the Healthy Asia-Pacific 2020. Strong health systems are central to the APEC 2018 priority of promoting sustainable and inclusive growth and to the ABAC Sustainable Development Working Group's 2018 theme of sustaining, developing and deepening inclusive growth opportunities.

The 8th High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy provides an invaluable opportunity to convene health care stakeholders to discuss innovative solutions and partnerships to overcome health challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region. The theme of the High-Level Meeting, “transforming primary health care through investment, innovation, and collaboration” is particularly apt given the 40th Anniversary of the Alma-Ata Declaration which underscored the importance of primary health care and called for urgent action by governments and others to promote the health of all people.

APEC economies face many health challenges from tuberculosis prevention and control, aging populations, non-communicable diseases, pandemics, anti-microbial resistance among others. ABAC has previously shown the significant predicted losses in GDP (of up to 8.5 percent) through 2030 due to ill-health and early retirement due to disability.

We welcome APEC's work in elevating the relationship between health and economic competitiveness losses and convening the necessary stakeholders including health, trade, and finance officials together with other international organizations, academia, the private sector and others to address these challenges. We urge APEC to continue its work to facilitate the development of multi-sectoral partnerships to inform policy development, optimize resources and increase access to medicine and healthcare services, and ensure the delivery of comprehensive lifecycle health services for people in our region.

Governments that make healthcare a priority have significantly better health outcomes and more productive workforces. Sufficient and sustainable health care financing is necessary and ABAC welcomes the continued collaboration between the Finance Ministers Process and the Life Sciences Innovation Forum and Health Working Group. This work is helping economies better measure their return on investment in health and thus where their resources should be deployed as well as assessing the policy and regulatory environment for enabling the adoption and deployment of alternative financing mechanisms to supplement public outlays and help maintain

and expand healthcare coverage. We welcome the initial work in Thailand and encourage additional economies to work with the private sector in creating innovative and sustainable health financing mechanisms.

ABAC supports efforts to establish platforms for policy dialogue and increase the adoption of open and transparent processes. We look forward to the development of principles for improving transparency and stakeholder consultation in the health and life sciences sector. Consistent with ABAC's work to avoid the development of non-tariff barriers to trade and promote efficient regulatory systems, we welcome progress towards APEC's goal of regulatory convergence for medical product approvals.

We recognize that women across the region are not reaching their potential to contribute to their economies due to preventable causes. We welcome continued development and utilization of the Healthy Women Healthy Economies toolkit to identify and implement government policies and business practices that advance women's health and well-being to support their economic participation.

We note the importance to respond proactively to population aging, and encourage economies to adopt policies and foster a social environment in which senior citizens are respected, cared for, and live happily in their later years. ABAC supports efforts to provide integrated elderly care and medical services, and accelerate the development of old-age programs and industries.

In order to succeed in combatting our health care challenges, governments, civil society, and business must work together. ABAC strongly supports APEC's health agenda and looks forward to continued collaboration with government officials to develop innovative solutions to support health and economic growth.

Yours sincerely,



David Toua
ABAC Chair 2018