

**CONCEPT NOTE**  
**SECURE Webinar #7**  
***The Health Communication Momentum: How do we accelerate?***  
**31 March 2023, 2:00–3:30 pm**

*The SECURE Webinar Series is a platform to promote innovative approaches and best practices for COVID-19 vaccination programs among Southeast Asia (SEA) developing member countries (DMCs) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The webinar series is supported by the ongoing ADB technical assistance (TA) on Supporting Enhanced COVID-19 Vaccination and Post COVID-19 Health Security Response in SEA, and it serves as a venue for knowledge and information exchange among governments, the private sector, development partners, CSO networks and other key stakeholders. Core messages of the series are: (1) immunization is still the most critical public health intervention for COVID-19 control and prevention, and (2) COVID-19 vaccines must be treated as global public good. Summary proceedings will be produced after each webinar and will be shared through designated platforms.*

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Along with the continuously changing contexts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our approach to health communications has been adjusted based on the needs and priorities at a given phase of this global outbreak. In the beginning, we had to communicate to the public the many unknowns of COVID-19, how the authorities were taking actions, and how – given the then very limited knowledge about the virus – people could protect themselves. We have been explaining updates on public health and social measures (PHSM), as well as on the sciences behind the virus, symptoms, and the latest tools supporting the response. We have had to introduce and roll out the COVID-19 vaccines – among the most important tools at our disposal as we continue to counter the pandemic, and mitigate its health and socioeconomic impacts.

More than three years into the pandemic and two years since vaccines were first rolled out, where are we now in terms of health communications? How has the actual pandemic situation vis-à-vis the people's risk perception impacted the vaccination programs across countries? In the beginning, with reports of its rapid spread, severe symptoms and death cases, the world recognized the high risks posed by COVID-19 – not to mention that it was a new disease, then without known vaccines and treatments yet. Generally, the public was anticipating getting the vaccines. Fast forward to 2022 up to the present, when coinciding with the rollout of booster doses was the decreasing trend in reported COVID-19 cases, some individuals have become complacent, seeing the additional vaccine dose/s as unnecessary. In which ways should these inform vaccine communications moving forward? What capacities should be further strengthened to effectively support countering such hesitancy, and where resources are inadequate, how do we strongly advocate for investment?

Now is the appropriate time to push for increased investment in health communications. The critical role played by the area has been recognized, countless times, throughout the COVID-19 response. The pandemic has definitely shaped the landscape of and positioned health communications at the heart of public health emergency management. We have witnessed resources being poured in for health communications, with gaps in public health even being filled in by partners in other sectors within and outside the government – a scene we could only wish for pre-pandemic. The question now is, at this point of COVID-19, is the momentum to strengthen the said technical area continued? How can national and local governments – as informed by the COVID-19 experience, lessons learnt and identified areas for further improvement – sustain or even increase the pandemic-induced investment received by health communications?

The seventh SECURE Webinar, *The Health Communication Momentum: How Do We Accelerate?*, brings together policymakers and public health practitioners to provide insights and discuss on the way forward for emergency health communications and stakeholder engagement at this point of the pandemic, when it is over and as more infectious diseases and other health security threats continue.

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## FINAL AGENDA

Moderator: Mr. Randy Dacanay, Senior TA Coordinator, TA 6767

Time	Session
2:00-2:05 PM	<p><b>Overview of the SECURE Webinar Series and SECURE TA</b></p> <p>Dr. Eduardo Banzon Principal Health Specialist, Human and Social Development Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB</p>
2:05-2:10 PM	<p><b>Welcome Remarks</b></p> <p>Ms. Ayako Inagaki Director, Human and Social Development Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB</p>
2:10-2:40 PM	<p><b>Risk = hazard + outrage: implications to COVID-19 vaccination programs and guide to health communications moving forward</b></p> <p>Ms. Lieke Visser, Risk Communications Officer, World Health Organization (WHO) Ms. Anna Biernat, Communications Officer, WHO</p>
2:40-3:00 PM	<p><b>Increasing investment for health communications: best practices and challenges moving forward</b></p> <p>Dr. Pahurat Kongmuang-Taisuwan, Director, Secretariat Office of the Royal Development Projects Committee, DDC, Ministry of Public Health  Dr. Christia Padolina, City Admin, Navotas City, Philippines</p>
3:00-3:20 PM	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
3:20-3:30 PM	<p><b>Summary and Closing Remarks</b></p>