

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Background Information

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was established in 1989 and has become the pre-eminent economic forum in the Asia-Pacific region. Its primary purpose is to facilitate economic growth and prosperity in the region, with the vision of creating a seamless regional economy. APEC pursues these objectives through trade and investment liberalization, business facilitation, and economic and technical cooperation.

APEC aims to strengthen regional economic integration by removing impediments to trade and investment “at the border”, enhancing supply chain connectivity “across the border” and improving the business environment “behind the border”. It seeks to improve the operating environment for business by reducing the cost of cross-border trade, improving access to trade information and simplifying regulatory and administrative processes. APEC also helps member economies build the institutional capacity to implement and take advantage of the benefits of trade and investment reform. APEC supports the multilateral trade negotiations underway in the World Trade Organization and complements the goals of the G-20 Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth in the Asia-Pacific Region.

In October 2003, APEC established the Health Task Force (HTF) to address health-related threats to economies' trade and security, focusing mainly on emerging infectious diseases, including naturally occurring and man-made diseases. In 2007, as a result of a review of the APEC fora, the HTF was upgraded in status to become the Health Working Group (HWG).

Addressing Cervical Cancer through APEC

A report released in 2011 by the World Economic Forum and the Harvard School of Public Health has estimated an output loss of \$47 trillion over 20 years from non-communicable diseases (NCDs). While the economic burden of NCDs is currently heaviest in high-income countries, developing countries, and particularly middle-income countries, are expected to bear an increasingly large economic burden from NCDs. APEC has recognized the growing need to address NCDs by endorsing an NCD Action Plan in 2011. Cervical cancer prevention and control represents a way for developing economies to have substantial impact on a chronic disease as APEC begins to implement its NCD Action Plan.

The opportunities presented by taking action on cervical cancer prevention and control include:

- Significantly reducing morbidity and mortality from a chronic disease that has available cost-effective measures;
- Taking advantage of new innovations and decreasing costs;
- Preventing women from morbidity, disability, and death at an age at which their loss presents significant risk of their children falling into poverty or being unable to climb out of poverty;
- Building momentum for countries to address other chronic conditions by showing success with cervical cancer prevention and control;
- Strengthen overall health systems capacities by stressing integration with existing and complimentary health systems;

- Complimenting APEC's stated goal of overcoming barriers to women's empowerment and leadership; and
- Providing a platform for regional collaboration.

CGH Engagement

The U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) partnered with the Cancer Hospital Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences to hold the APEC Regional Workshop on Enabling Sustainable Economic Advancement for Women through Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control in Beijing, China in August 2014. The meeting improved Asia-Pacific public health officials' knowledge about state-of-the-science and best practices in cervical cancer prevention and control and recommendations for progress on addressing cervical cancer in APEC economies were developed. At the APEC Senior Officials Meeting 3 in the Philippines in August 2015, the cervical cancer recommendations were approved by the APEC HWG.

On August 23, 2016, NCI partnered with the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas (INEN) in APEC host country Peru to convene [Cervical Cancer Control Workshop 2016](#). This workshop focused on developing strategies for implementation of the APEC cervical cancer recommendations, and through which NCI and INEN achieved the following:

- Jointly promote the policy recommendations from the APEC Cervical Cancer Workshop 2014 including development of a high-level policy statement;
- Build consensus for the APEC Roadmap for Implementation of Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control;
- Explore collaborative whole-of-government and whole-of-society initiatives for implementation within the Roadmap; and
- Identify tools and resources to assist with Roadmap implementation (e.g. policy toolkit, literature reviews, decision-making matrices, best practice documents).