

Seventy-Fifth World Health Assembly
Shigeyuki GOTO, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Government of Japan

Thank you, Chair. I am Shigeyuki GOTO, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan. I am honored to speak on behalf of the Government of Japan.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Director-General Dr. Tedros and the WHO Secretariat for their dedicated work for the COVID-19 pandemic with an eye to the post-pandemic future.

Chair, peace is essential for sustainable development. Likewise, peace is indispensable to health and well-being brought about by the achievement of Universal Health Coverage.

The recent aggression by Russia against Ukraine is a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force, and an act that shakes the very foundations of the international order. Japan condemns the attacks on health care facilities and health care workers, and is deeply concerned that the country is facing difficulties in ensuring an adequate health care environment.

Japan joins Dr. Tedros in his call for a stronger and more inclusive health emergency preparedness and response, to tackle current and future health emergencies.

We also welcome the global recognition of the importance of UHC in the context of health emergencies. This includes health care that is scalable, a trained health workforce that is rapidly deployable, and essential health care services that is accessible and equitable.

To strengthen health emergency preparedness and response, we emphasize these three points.

Firstly, Member States need to agree on the targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations 2005 and continue to draft a new pandemic instrument.

As a committed member of the bureau at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body, Japan will contribute to this comprehensive process.

Secondly, I would like to emphasize that we should refer to good examples of regions that successfully tackled COVID-19 in terms of public health response, such as Taiwan. We should not make any geographical vacuums created by leaving specific regions behind in addressing global health issues such as infection control. This will serve the purpose of preventing the spread of infection worldwide.

Finally, it is important that the WHO plays a central role in addressing diverse health challenges. This is why Japan recognizes the need for WHO's sustainable financing.

The WHO's activities to ensure the health and well-being of all people align with Japan's global health priority, and we hope for the WHO to continue to provide its support while accounting for the regional and national diversity.

Thank you for your kind attention.