

## Seventy-Fourth World Health Assembly

Norihisa TAMURA, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Government of Japan

Honorable President, my name is Norihisa TAMURA, 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 for the dedication by Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and the WHO Secretariat to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

First, regarding COVID-19, Japan has placed the utmost priority on protecting people's health and lives. With a strong sense of urgency, Japan has been working hard to deal with variants of the virus and strengthening border measures.

Furthermore, Japan fully supports ensuring equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. Japan will co-host the COVAX AMC Summit with Gavi on June 2nd to contribute to ensuring equitable access to safe, effective and quality-assured vaccines.

Second, it has become clear that ensuring essential health services is vital more than ever during this pandemic.

We have high expectations that the WHO continues to support member states to advance universal health coverage in line with diversity of regions and countries.

Honorable President, Japan also believes that a comprehensive review of this pandemic will also lead to strengthening global preparedness and response to infectious diseases.

We expect that the WHO plays a leading and a coordinating role to be better prepared for future crises based on the recommendations of the "Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response" and the "IHR Review Committee".

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

Furthermore, regarding the WHO-convened COVID-19 origins study, we call for strengthening efforts to improve access to original data and samples as well as ensuring transparency.

Lastly, malnutrition and growth stunting are on the rise due to COVID-19. Japan will support countries in implementing nutrition programmes through the Tokyo Nutrition Summit in 2021.

To conclude, the Government of Japan will continue to actively support WHO activities to ensure health for all. Thank you for your kind attention.