

Speech by GOTO Shigeyuki, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan at the special session of the World Health Assembly (WHASS)

- Director-General Dr. Tedros, honourable ministers, it has been nearly two years since the beginning of our global fight against COVID-19.
- We appreciate Dr. Tedros and the WHO for their dedication during this most difficult time.
- In order to live with this virus, Japan has implemented new lifestyles to achieve a peaceful balance between effective infection control and healthy function of society.
- After the 74<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly, Japan was honoured to hold the Olympic Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.
- The Tokyo Games proved to be a symbol of global unity among people around the world, and our appreciation goes to WHO for its advice on effective infection control.
- At the Regional Committee led by our Regional Director Dr. Takeshi Kasai, Member States of the Western Pacific discussed key actions required to tackle COVID-19 in the region.

- Dear colleagues and friends. Japan is confident that in the spirit of hope, solidarity and determination, the world can share moments of joy and inspiration.
- In this special session of the World Health Assembly, Member States united to take a leap forward for better global prevention, preparedness and response against future health emergencies.
- During the three days, Japan will highlight the importance of achieving universal health coverage as a high-level principle in the new instrument.
- It is fundamental for stronger health systems and equitable access to medical countermeasures under the principle of “no one left behind”.
- Through international coordination and collaboration, Japan remains committed to the global discussion on the two urgent processes to better prevent, prepare and respond to pandemics:
  - Firstly, a new instrument.
  - Secondly, strengthening the International Health Regulations, including through implementation, compliance and targeted amendments.
- Japan will work further with WHO and other Member States to rebuild the Global Health Architecture led by a stronger WHO.