

Statement of Dr. Kang Ha Guk, the Minister for Public Health, DPR Korea at the 70th World Health Assembly

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the DPRK delegation, I appreciate Dr. Margaret Chan for her tremendous contributions to the global health development, while warmly congratulating Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the new Director General Elect.

Mr. President, Honorable Heads of the Delegations,

It is quite significant to be gathered here together for general discussion under the theme of “Building Better Systems for Health in the Age of Sustainable Development” in succession to the previous theme of “Transforming our World; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” .

The world has advanced at the big stride during the last year in achieving the SDGs, particularly, the health-related goals in good collaboration with the member states such as reducing maternal and child mortality, combating communicable diseases and NCDs, access to essential drugs and increasing the health workforce, etc.

The Government of DPR Korea, having endorsed on the SDGs considered to be in conformity with our policy of building the socialist strong country, has vigorously steered forward for those implementation based on the long-existing strong national health system with the fully-guaranteed free Universal Health Coverage as its backbone.

The respected Supreme Leader Comrade **Kim Jong Un**, the Chairman of the Workers’ Party of Korea and the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, DPRK, at the 7th Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea projected the programmatic tasks to the health sector to drastically decrease the prevalence of the diseases, to strengthen the household doctor system, to improve the quality of the health services, to promote the medical science & technology and to strengthen the medical supplies provision. Under the 5-year National Economy Development Strategic Plan, the health sector has set the ambitious target to improve many health indicators like average life expectancy, infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio upto the advanced world level by the year 2020.

Our consistent fundamental motto of the health sector is to leave no one left behind from the benefit of universal health coverage and to provide utmost devotion to all the patients in all the health facilities, while focusing on the children, the future of the country. The good example is the priority construction of the health facilities, nurseries, kindergartens and schools in the flood-affected northern part of the country last year, and the recent modern

renovation of all the provincial baby homes, children's homes and boarding elementary/secondary schools.

Under the direct attention and energetic leadership of the Respected Supreme Leader, during the span of only one year, new health facilities such as Ryugyong General Eye Hospital, Dental Hygiene Supplies Factory and Medical Oxygen Factory have been newly constructed and inaugurated. Meanwhile, whole-country tele-medicine network has been further technically upgraded, evidence-based combination of the allopathic and traditional Koryo medicine further modernized, pharmaceutical factories renovated, pre-service & in-service medical education further improved with special inputs to the household doctors at the PHC level, and the quality of the vaccination & deworming programs further strengthened.

Since the health-related SDGs are not the sole responsibility of the health sector only, rather, the whole-national work requiring the collaboration between all the relevant sectors and stakeholders, many health issues like TB control, addressing NCD & tobacco control, preventing the importation of the new-emerging epidemic diseases like ebola & zika virus are being well-coordinated at the national multi-sectoral levels.

All these have contributed immensely to cement our people-centered health system and promoting the people's health, and we dare to proudly say that all these achievements are so precious and valid for having been secured with our own resources in spite of the unprecedented sanctions and blockade against us imposed by the hostile powers.

Dear Mr. President and Heads of the Delegations,

2 years have already elapsed since the adoption of the 2030 agenda on Sustainable Development, and still, the challenges impeding the independent development of the sovereign countries continue to be existing on the international arena. SDGs strongly require strict respect to the territorial integrity and political independence, guarantee of the complete and lasting sovereignty exercise of economic activities and prohibition of economic, monetary and trade measures contradicting the international laws and the UN Charter. These SDGs aspiring for the welfare of our mankind will never be achieved, as far as the tyrannical political, military and economic pressure and threat out of one-sided criteria and hostile concept towards other countries' political system are not terminated.

The Government of DPRK is committed to continue its close collaboration with WHO and many countries of the world in its endeavors for attaining the health-related SDGs and building the better and healthier world. And we always welcome the countries wishing for the bilateral, multilateral south-south health cooperation and academic & technical exchanges with our country. Thank you.

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