

GENERAL STATEMENT
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
SEVENTY-FIFTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
(21-30 May 2023)

Mr. President,

First of all, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), I would like to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 76th World Health Assembly. I am confident that this meeting will turn out to be successful under your able leadership.

I also take this opportunity to thank WHO Director-General and the Secretariat for their efforts made for the successful opening of the Assembly which is being held in the meaningful year marking the 75th founding anniversary of WHO.

It is expected that our gathering here, looking back on last 75 years since the foundation of WHO, will be an important occasion in overcoming the current health challenges and difficulties and improving the quality of life by amplifying all successes achieved by WHO, its member states and well-known and unsung health workers with unmeasurable devotion and efforts to save the human lives, protect and promote their health.

From this point of view, the DPRK delegation supports the theme of this Assembly, "WHO at 75: Saving lives, driving health for all".

Mr. President,

The global public health crisis of COVID-19, which lasted for more than 3 years plunging the mankind into the great misery and panic, gives us all serious lessons and highlights the importance of finding the practical solutions to cope with other health emergencies that may occur in the future.

Precious lives were lost due to the lack of coordination and solidarity although the world had the capacity, resources and technology to better prepare for and control the pandemic. This fact badly requires establishing an efficient mechanism to coordinate firm solidarity and mutual cooperation worldwide.

It is from this point of view that the DPRK delegation supports the ongoing WHO's formulation of the new "International Convention on Pandemic" and revising of the current IHR and holds that a stronger coordinating mechanism be established through these processes.

Strengthening the IHR and adopting a new convention or treaty need to be directed towards preventing, preparing for in timely manner, and responding rapidly to pandemics in all respects. In this regard, the sovereignty of the member states should be respected with their equity ensured, and any attempt to politicize the activities of the Organization

should never be tolerated.

Mr. President,

The DPRK, for the last 75 years after its foundation, has set it as the most important task to protect and promote the life and health of the people, enforcing the universal free medical system and adopting the preventive medicine as an important health policy of the state.

Comrade **KIM JONG UN**, President of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea taught that it is the physiology of our public health to put the life protection and health promotion of all the people at the top, and to subordinate and orient everything to this end.

In order to protect and promote the life and health of the people, the DPRK has put forward an important political task to perfect a people-oriented, advanced and efficient medical care system by continuously improving and strengthening the medical services, developing medical science and technology onto the world's advanced level and is making efforts for its implementation by systematically increasing the investment to the health sector.

During the 4-year-long global public health crisis, particularly during 91 days when the maximum emergency epidemic prevention system had been operational with the inflow of malicious virus into our territory in May last year, thanks to the enforcement of the timely and scientific state measures under the wise leadership of the Party and State, we could defend the health of the people and safety of the country in the life-or-death situation and furthermore, achieve a great victory in the epidemic prevention warfare.

The DPRK has set forth the state anti-epidemic capability building as an important state affair that brooks no a moment's delay and is actively implementing it to cope with possible outbreaks of malignant diseases.

Parallel active efforts are being made to build anew and modernize the pharmaceutical factories, medical appliances factories and medical consumables factories to provide various medicines including essential medicines for the treatment and health promotion of the people.

Mr. President,

The DPRK will fulfill its responsible duty to protect the life of the people and to promote their health and welfare, also make an active contribution to building a sound and fair global health system in the future, too.

Thank you.