

GENERAL STATEMENT
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
SEVENTY-THIRD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
(Geneva, 18-19 May 2020)

Mr. President,

At the outset, the Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) would like to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 73rd World Health Assembly and express its conviction that the Assembly will result a fruitful outcome under your skillful leadership.

We would also appreciate Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and his work team of the Secretariat for their sincere efforts devoted to ensure successful proceedings of the Assembly in the time of crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

The DPRK Delegation supports taking the COVID-19 response as the main topic of the Assembly and expects that the international community would be prepared with practical measures to effectively respond to the pandemic through the current Assembly.

At present, COVID-19 has been extended into a global catastrophe by seriously threatening people's lives and giving huge strike to the world economy, which arouses great anxiety and concern of the international community, and the fight against the pandemic bears a close resemblance to a world war.

From the beginning of the epidemic outbreak, the DPRK government has sounded alarm bells over its danger and has moved swiftly into a scientific and preemptive super-class emergency anti-epidemic system to completely block all possible influx space of infectious disease and take strict measures to prevent its infection.

In particular, public health and anti-epidemic establishments maintain close cooperation with people's government organs at all levels, while the responsibility and role of medical workers in charge of households under the section doctor system increased and hygiene propaganda on its global situation and prevention & treatment measures enhanced, which has turned the anti-epidemic work into an all-out struggle with active response of the whole

nation.

It is the firm determination and will of Comrade **KIM JONG UN**, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that nothing can be bartered with the life and safety of the people although we could suffer a huge economic loss, who has initiated in person the current super-class emergency anti- epidemic system.

We pride ourselves on the fact that there is no single confirmed case of COVID-19 to date in our country, which is thanks to the prominent leadership and noble politics of love for people of Comrade **KIM JONG UN**, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission and the fruit of the people-oriented health system based on the complete and comprehensive free medical care and preventive medical policy that the government of our Republic has consistently executed despite of the unprecedented sanctions and blockade by the hostile forces.

Mr. President,

The DPRK Delegation deems that due attention should be paid to the following issues in containing shortly the spread of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the common enemy of the whole world.

First, we recognize that the most urgent task is to prepare for a united response by building a strong global solidarity and mutual cooperation that encompasses the North and the South, the East and the West and to perform its coordination with success.

In this regard, we express our full support for the resolution, submitted at the Assembly, on enhancing international cooperation to develop, test and produce safe, effective, quality diagnostics, medicines & vaccines for COVID-19 response, and to facilitate the equitable and affordable access of people to them under the leadership of WHO.

Second, we believe that all Member States need to actively take timely and intensive anti-epidemic measures based on their actual conditions and in consideration of the International Health Regulations (IHR) and relevant WHO guidelines, while proactive steps should be made actually contributable to the global joint response.

We take this opportunity to strongly urge the countries concerned to immediately withdraw existing unilateral economic, financial and trade restrictions and anti-humanitarian sanctions contradicting UN Charter and other international laws, and to end all kinds of discrimination and politicization in providing assistance, keeping in mind the mission of our time and in line with

the global solidarity and mutual cooperation.

Third, we should be wary of some countries' attempts to use the catastrophe for their impure political purposes. It is another expression of irresponsibility to pass to WHO and one of its Member States the blame caused by their ignoring the warnings of WHO with no proper action.

Now it is a common perception of the international community that, at this grave juncture, positive support and backing should be provided to WHO and greater importance be attached to its activities to defeat the pandemic including the large-scale Solidarity Clinical Trials.

Besides, it is a clear deviation from the focused discussion to raise inappropriate issues like "someone's responsibility", explicating the origin of virus, and Taiwan's membership to the current Assembly whose main topic is to work collaboratively in COVID-19 response, and any attempt to disunite the Member States is fully opposed.

We are confident that WHO would fulfill the heavy responsibility under its mandate and play a leading role in COVID-19 response by realistically reinforcing IHR, providing necessary material and technical assistance readily and accurately and ensuring good practice & experience exchange, development of vaccines & medicines and their reasonable pricing.

The DPRK government, who takes the people-first principle as its basic doctrine, will never be relieved from the fact that the novel coronavirus failed to find its way into the country, and fulfill its responsibility for securing the health, life and safety of the people while working closely with WHO and all other Member States in the fight against the pandemic.

Thank you.