

The Statement of Mr. Kato Katsunobu Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan
in Seventy Third World Health Assembly

Ms. Chairperson, Thank you. Today, I would like to make three points.

Firstly, Japan has been promoting, from early on, active epidemiological investigation and social distancing policies to reduce the spread of the virus. Meanwhile, observing a sharp increase in the number of cases, Japan has declared the state of emergency on April 7th, to implement some measures including urging people to refrain from going out, except when absolutely necessary. The number of newly infected patients per day has decreased thanks to people's close cooperation with such measures, thus the social distancing policy has started to be gradually relaxed from May 14th. From now on, it is critically important to steadily implement the exit strategy, to enhance the testing scheme and healthcare delivery system, as well as to develop and supply therapeutic drugs and vaccines.

Secondly, I would like to comment on Japanese contributions to the global strategy against COVID-19, 76 million US dollars to WHO's SPRP, 96 million US dollars to CEPI and 100 million US dollars to Gavi. I sincerely hope that such funds will be used effectively to bring an end to the pandemic and improve the people's lives in affected countries as soon as possible.

Thirdly, I would like to express my requests for WHO. The impact that this pandemic has had is immense. I would like to address the need for impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation to review WHO's response, as well as to identify the source of the virus and the route of transmission to prevent the next pandemic. Moreover, it is crucial to collectively mobilize all the information and knowledge available in the world to tackle COVID-19 and to save as many lives as possible. It also has been pointed out that the consideration should be given to regions which successfully embraced COVID-19 in terms of public health response, such as Taiwan. As being in a position responsible for public health measures, I would like to state we should not leave any geographical vacuums in addressing global health issues such as infectious disease control, which will serve the purpose to prevent the spread of infection in each country and worldwide.

I would like to end my remarks by reiterating that the Government of Japan will continue to make every effort to put an end to this situation in collaboration with each member state and related regions and organizations.

Thank you chair.