



GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL WELFARE AND GENDER AFFAIRS

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA)

NOVEMBER 09-14 2020

INTERVENTIONS

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TUVALU INTERVENTION NO 3.

13.2 WHO's work in health emergencies

Chair, Director General, Your Excellency, Honourable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates

1. Mr. President, on behalf of the Tuvalu delegation, I am honoured to deliver our country's statement on **WHO's work in health emergencies**.
2. Tuvalu congratulates WHO for their leadership, dedication and continuous work being done to combat COVID-19.
3. Due to a small workforce and constant brain drain, Tuvalu's capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to health Emergencies is always a challenge, so we are grateful for the immense leadership provided by Dr Kasai, Regional Director for the Western Pacific and the support provided through his Fiji based WHO team.
4. Tuvalu remains COVID-19 free and we have worked tirelessly to keep it that way. This has included leadership from our Prime Minister and Cabinet, a national Taskforce that includes, Government, NGO, Faith based and private sector representatives and seven sub committees who work across a range of focus areas for preparedness, response and readiness.
5. As it takes a 'village' to raise a child, it takes a concerted collaborative effort across the whole of Government and beyond to respond effectively to health emergencies.
6. WHO and member states alike, need to consider; review and reform at all levels of response to health emergencies, as we must learn from the last experience to make the response to the next emergency better.
7. WHO also need to work to improve inter agency coordination mechanisms and information sharing with development partners, across the entire UN, as although technical and financial assistance is paramount to our response efforts, providing the same information to a myriad of agencies and partners (in a pre-designed Agency questionnaire or survey), is time consuming for our small island health teams, and takes away from their efforts on the front line.

8. Due to its exclusion from WHO, Taiwan has received only incomplete and delayed information since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak. Fortunately, Taiwan learned from the 2003 SARS epidemic and took timely and effective measures against COVID-19.
9. With Taiwan's robust health care system, rigorous testing, information transparency, and collaboration between the government and the private sector, Taiwan's response has been one of the most successful worldwide.
10. Hence, Tuvalu must reiterate again, WHO needs to practise what is preached: Let's 'Leave no one behind'. Taiwan must be included as an Observer to the WHA, as they can contribute greatly in terms of all of us' moving together to build a better world'.

Thank you