TUVALU GOVERNMENT

Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs
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74th World Health Assembly, 24 May - 1 June 2021
Theme: Ending this Pandemic, Preventing the Next: Building Together a Healthier, Safer and Fairer World.

1. MR PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR GENERAL, DR TEDROS, EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM PLEASED TO GIVE THIS STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF TUVALU.

2. TO DATE, TUVALU REMAINS COVID-19 FREE, HOWEVER WE CONTINUE TO WITNESS THE DEVASTATING IMPACTS OF COVID-19 AND THE EMERGING VARIANTS AROUND THE WORLD.

3. OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES TO THIS DEADLY VIRUS.

4. WE APPLAUD THE CONTINUOS EFFORTS OF ALL HEALTH WORKERS AND RESPONSE TEAMS AROUND THE WORLD.

5. TUVALU CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN OUR SYSTEMS TO ENSURE THE MAXIMUM PROTECTION OF OUR CITIZEN THROUGH:

   a. MOBILISING MULTI-SECTORAL COORDINATION THROUGH A NATIONAL PLANNING AND RESPONSE TAKSFORCE AND 7 SUB - COMMITTEES

   b. IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT;

   c. PREPARING OUR TESTING LABORATORY AND HEALTH FACILITIES.

   d. MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR OUR PEOPLE;

e. STRENGHTENING OUR INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL MECHANISMS;

f. INSTITUTING NON-PHARMACEUTICAL PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES AND;

g. KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES INFORMED; THROUGH REGULAR NATIONAL PRESS CONFERENCES, RADIO, TV AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS.

6. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE RECEIPT OF **WHO** APPROVED ASTRAZENECA VACCINES FROM COVAX.

7. OUR HEALTH WORKERS CONTINUE TO ADMINISTER FIRST DOSES OF THE VACCINE; WITH THE SECOND DOSE TO BE ADMINISTERED AFTER 10-12 WEEKS.

8. THE EEMERGENCE OF MORE COVID-19 VARIANTS IS A WAKEUP CALL TO DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO HASTEN THE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SAFE COVID VACCINES.

9. DESPITE THE HUGE CHALLENGES POSED BY COVID 19 AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES, WE CONTINUE TO ALSO FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON MANAGING NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCD's), AS THESE ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF MORTALITY IN TUVALU.

10. HENCE, STRENTHENING TUVALU'S PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM REMAINS A PRIORITY; INCLUDING UPDATING AND ENFORCING LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES; PROVIDING TRAINING FOR OUR TEAMS AND ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITIES, ALL EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF COMMUNICABLE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

11. TUVALU ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT FOR OUR RESPONSE EFFORTS FROM TECHNICAL AGENCIES AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS.

12. THIS INCLUDES THE GOVERNMENT OF TAIWAN; SO, I TAKE THIS OPORTUNITY TO REAFFIRM TUVALU'S CALL FOR THE INCLUSION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY.

13. THANK YOU TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY AKCNOWLEDGING THE LEADERSHIP OF DR KASAI.

14. LASTLY, AS PER THIS YEAR'S THEME, TUVALU STANDS WITH YOU TO "**END THIS PANDEMIC, PREVENT THE NEXT AND BUILD TOGETHER A HEALTHIER, SAFER AND FAIRER WORLD**".

FAKAFETAI LASI AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.