Statement by Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

At the General Debate of the 2020 UN High-Level Political Forum
on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of ECOSOC

Your Excellency, Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency, Ms. Mona Juul, President of ECOSOC,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

We are currently facing the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19. In this highly
globalized modern society, international cooperation is essential to help prevent the
spread of the pandemic through the sharing of information and expertise, as well
as collaboration on development of vaccines.

The principle of “leaving no one behind” and the notion of human security which
focuses on the most vulnerable, are the key tenets in Japan’s countering COVID-
19.

We have worked bilaterally, and through international organizations such as WHO,
UNICEF and UNDP to provide assistance to developing countries in Asia, Africa
and other parts of the world where health care systems are fragile.

For instance, we have provided technical assistance to medical professionals in
Indonesia and Myanmar. In Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi, Japan focused on
improving sanitary conditions and establishing hygiene habits. We also supported
the digital transformation in these countries.

Such efforts not only enhance efficiency but also help prevent the spread of
infectious diseases. Furthermore, Japan has been actively promoting the universal
health coverage through strengthening health care systems globally.

People’s creativity is essential in bringing about innovation. For example, in
Rwanda, an American startup in partnership with a Japanese company runs a
business to transport COVID-19 testing samples via drones. Online diagnosis
through smartphone applications and distance-learning are becoming more
prevalent.

In the process of overcoming the crisis, we need to mobilize all sorts of innovation
and new lifestyles that will prompt our society to transform into a more advanced
one.
This year marks year-one of the “Decade of Action” towards the achievement of SDGs. “The future depends on what you do today” coined by Mahatma Gandhi reminds us of how we should act now. By the same token, the first year of the decade of action will determine the fate of SDGs.

Japan will be working with the international community, mindful of the ideals of SDGs, to step up our efforts more than before.

Thank you.