

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.