

## The Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs

Let me start by expressing my gratitude for the holding of the annual ministerial meeting of LDCs in a virtual format during this difficult time. As the impacts of COVID-19 on LDCs are a matter of great concern to the international community, we could not emphasize more the importance of this meeting.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Malawi, the Chair of the LDCs, and to the speakers for their valuable remarks.

COVID-19 has caused and is still causing a serious human security crisis, which is posing multifaced threats not only to people's survival but also to their livelihoods and dignity.

An inclusive approach based on the concept of human security, focusing on the protection and empowerment of every individual, is especially important so that the most vulnerable among us are not left behind.

As a longstanding development partner of the LDCs, Japan has been supporting them to overcome the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Japan has implemented swift assistance measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic since the earliest stage of its spread, with a view to playing a central role under international cooperation.

In response to the United Nations humanitarian assistance appeal, Japan has been providing technical assistance to medical personnel, and has been assisting developing countries, including LDCs, in implementing counter-infection measures and strengthening their healthcare systems.

Furthermore, Japan has been actively promoting the universal health coverage (UHC) through the strengthening health care systems around the world.

The 5th UN Conference on LDCs and the next Program of Action of LDCs are crucial milestones towards the sustainable development of LDCs. It is regrettable that the conference was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Japan would like to commend Qatar's initiative to host the conference in January of 2022.

Japan is ready to proactively assist LDCs to achieve the SDGs, focusing on health and UHC, disaster risk reduction, environmental issues including marine plastic litter, education and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT).

Finally, Japan remains committed to the sustainable development of LDCs and looks forward to actively participating in the process toward the 5th UN conference on LDCs.