

Statement by Mr. ENDO Kazuya, Senior Deputy Minister for
Foreign Affairs

at the UN General Assembly High-level Meeting
on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response
25 September 2026, Plenary Segment

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly and the co-facilitators, Armenia and Rwanda, for their efforts in convening this important meeting.

We do not know when or where the next pandemic will emerge. What we do know is that the choices we make today will determine how prepared we are when it does.

The lessons of COVID-19 are clear: no country can prevent, prepare for, or respond to a pandemic alone.

Solidarity is not only a shared value, it is a practical necessity.

Japan therefore supports the draft political declaration, which

advances multilateral cooperation to prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics.

We must work together across borders, while reaffirming the principle of the sovereignty of States in addressing public health matters.

Amid the current Ebola outbreak, Japan has provided a total of 8.5 million US dollars to support Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

Just two days ago, at the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of UHC, which Japan co-hosted with Thailand and Georgia, we renewed our shared commitment to advancing UHC.

Our own experience has taught us that UHC is not a luxury that comes AFTER economic development.

Rather, it is the foundation for social stability and sustainable growth.

Japan has promoted global efforts toward achieving UHC, including through the UHC Knowledge Hub, as resilient health systems are essential to preparedness against health emergencies.

International rules and institutions also matter. Japan regards the adoption of the WHO Pandemic Agreement in 2025 as an important step forward.

We will continue to contribute constructively to negotiations on its Annex.

Excellencies,

We cannot choose when the next crisis will come. But we can choose how we prepare for it.

The time to strengthen health systems is now.

The time to invest in preparedness is now.

And the time to strengthen solidarity is now.

Japan will continue to work with the international community to turn the lessons of the past into action today.

Thank you.