

Meeting Report

AD HOC VIRTUAL MEETING ON COVID-19 (ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN CONTINUING TO SUPPORT THE COVID-19 RESPONSE, INCLUDING IN RELATION TO VACCINES AND VIRUS VARIANTS)



26 April 2021
Virtual meeting

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

English only

MEETING REPORT

AD HOC VIRTUAL MEETING ON COVID-19
(ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN CONTINUING TO SUPPORT
THE COVID-19 RESPONSE, INCLUDING IN RELATION TO VACCINES AND VIRUS
VARIANTS)

Virtual meeting
26 April 2021



AD HOC VIRTUAL MEETING ON COVID-19

Enhancing the role of parliamentarians in continuing to support the COVID-19 response, including in relation to vaccines and virus variants

26 April 2021

MEETING REPORT

Hosted by:

ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARIAN FORUM ON GLOBAL HEALTH

With support from:

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

Not for sale

Printed and distributed by:
World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Western Pacific
Manila, Philippines
May 2021

Asia-Pacific
PARLIAMENTARIAN FORUM
on Global Health

AD HOC VIRTUAL MEETING ON COVID-19

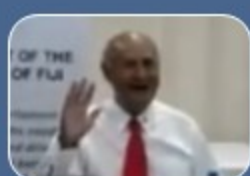
Enhancing the role of parliamentarians in continuing to support the COVID-19 response, including in relation to vaccines and virus variants

26 April 2021

Online, 11:00 to 14:00 (Manila Time)



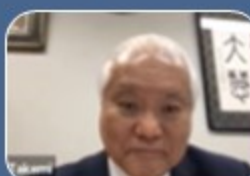
Australia



Fiji



Fiji



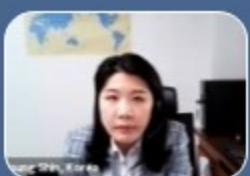
Japan



Kiribati



Republic of
Korea



Republic of
Korea



Malaysia



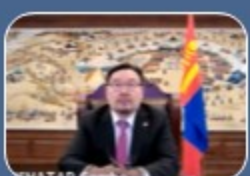
Malaysia



Federated States
of Micronesia



Federated States
of Micronesia



Mongolia



Mongolia



New Zealand



Philippines



Philippines



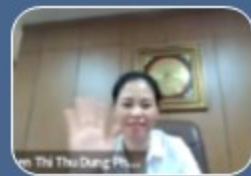
Solomon Islands



Tonga



Vanuatu



Viet Nam



WHO SEARO



WHO WPRO

NOTE

This report has been prepared by the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific as the Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum on Global Health.

The views expressed in this report are those of the participants of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum on Global Health Ad Hoc Virtual Meeting on COVID-19 on enhancing the role of parliamentarians in continuing to support the COVID-19 response, including in relation to vaccines and virus variants and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the conveners.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Meeting organization	2
1.2 Meeting objectives	3
2. PROCEEDINGS	3
2.1 Block A: Opening	3
2.2 Block B: Forum President changeover	4
2.3 Block C: COVID-19 updates	6
2.4 Block D: Parliamentary discussion	7
2.4.1 Country perspective: Mongolia.....	7
2.4.2 Country perspective: Republic of Korea.....	8
2.4.3 Country perspective: Japan	8
2.4.4 Country perspective: Fiji.....	9
2.4.5 Country perspective: Philippines	9
2.4.6 Open parliamentary discussion	10
2.5 Block E: Closing.....	12
3. FOLLOW-UP POINTS.....	12
ANNEXES	13
Annex 1. Programme	13
Annex 2. List of participants.....	16

Keywords: Betacoronavirus / Coronavirus infections /COVID-19 / COVID-19 vaccines /
Global health / Infection control / International cooperation

SUMMARY

On 26 April 2021, the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum on Global Health convened an ad hoc virtual meeting to enhance the role of parliamentarians in continuing to support the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response, including in relation vaccines and virus variants. In all, 22 parliamentarians participated from 14 countries, with a further two countries sending observers. The meeting was presided over by the Honourable Professor Keizo Takemi, President of Forum, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The meeting objectives were:

- 1) to obtain updated information from WHO on the COVID-19 situation in the region;
- 2) to share experiences on COVID-19 virus variants and vaccines, including consideration of how parliamentarians can support action to secure equitable and timely distribution of vaccines; and
- 3) to bid farewell to the current President and welcome a new President of the Forum.

The meeting saw the departure of Professor Takemi as President of the Forum, who members thanked for providing his leadership and political wisdom over the past four years. Members decided unanimously to appoint the Honourable Mr Minseok Kim, Chair of the Health and Welfare Committee, National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, as the new Forum President. Mr Kim pledged to lead the Forum to continue to promote health in the region and called for solidarity to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, which he described as a watershed moment for humanity.

WHO provided updates on the COVID-19 situation in the region, including virus variants, vaccines, and the impact on fiscal space for health and future budgets. Discussion during the meeting was initiated with presentations from Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Fiji, and the Philippines, sharing experiences of parliamentary actions related to COVID-19, particularly on efforts to support the deployment of vaccines and manage the ongoing health and financial impact.

Parliamentarians encouraged each other to support national and regional efforts, including by:

- updating public health emergency legislation to underpin the response, including vital non-pharmaceutical interventions;
- adopting legislative initiatives to expedite and speed up the process of enabling the use of safe and effective vaccines, treatments and diagnostics;
- providing financial support to households and businesses;
- considering options to support new public health infrastructure and institutions to strengthen health security; and
- maintaining essential services and ensuring that non-COVID-19 health issues such as tuberculosis, mental health and noncommunicable diseases are not neglected.

Participants emphasized that the region will only combat and recover from the pandemic together and called for solidarity among parliamentarians and countries, including to promote vaccine equity and continued investment in public health.

Moving forward, WHO welcomed engagement and input from parliamentarians on country actions to combat COVID-19 and committed to continue supporting the Forum by sharing technical information, providing technical guidance and facilitating communication between Forum members, particularly on legislative changes related to the COVID-19 response.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum on Global Health is a platform for parliamentarians to exchange ideas, build political will, strengthen capacities and foster collaboration in driving sustainable action for health. Established in 2015 with technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, the Forum is open to the 30 countries comprising the Member States of the WHO Western Pacific Region and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Strategically positioned to help align global health mandates with regional and domestic priorities and to facilitate national implementation of international health commitments, the Forum is an important part of WHO assistance to Member States in Asia and the Pacific in championing health beyond the health sector and taking a whole-of-government approach to enhance the rule of law in health governance and expand the role of law in health policy.

On 7 January 2020, authorities in China identified a novel coronavirus from a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown etiology in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei province. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern, then a pandemic on 11 March 2020. As of 25 March 2021, more than 124 million confirmed cases and more than 2.7 million deaths have been reported globally. Countries and areas in the Western Pacific Region have reported over 1.8 million cases and over 31 000 deaths.

Several years of investments in strengthening systems for preparedness and response over several years, guided by the *Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases* (APSED), have helped to keep cases and deaths in the region relatively low compared to other regions. However, it is common for viruses to change as they circulate, and these changes can lead to changes in characteristics of the virus, leading to so-called variants. Variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, were first identified in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (B.1.1.7), South Africa (B.1.351) and Brazil (B.1.1.28.1) and have spread to many other countries across the world, with all three being reported in the Asia Pacific region.

Safe and effective vaccines offer hope and a critical new tool in the battle against COVID-19. But they will not end the pandemic, at least not in the short term. WHO is advising countries to maintain public health and social measures, including testing and contact tracing, followed by isolation and quarantine as appropriate for the foreseeable future, and continue to strengthen public health systems. Most countries in the region have begun rolling out COVID-19 vaccines sourced through the COVAX Facility, bilateral procurements and donations. However, the whole world faces the challenge of a huge gap between supply and demand as production capacity across the world cannot rapidly scale up.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also having a significant financial impact on households, businesses and governments. As countries face shrinking fiscal space, presenting a risk to current and future health

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_23870

