

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

KIM JONG UN

**LET US GUARANTEE MORE
DEPENDABLY THE SAFETY
OF THE STATE AND PEOPLE BY
FOLLOWING UP THE SUCCESSES
WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE
WAR AGAINST THE EPIDEMIC**

Speech at the National Meeting to Review
the Emergency Anti-Epidemic Work
August 10, Juche 111 (2022)

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Workers in the anti-epidemic and public health fields across the country,

Party delegates and army officers deployed to the border, frontline and coastal areas,

Commanding officers of the State Emergency Epidemic Prevention Headquarters and the epidemic prevention divisions, regiments and battalions,

Others who have contributed to the anti-epidemic work,

Dear comrades,

The arduous war against the epidemic is over, and today we are proclaiming victory.

More than 100 days have passed since Covid-19 entered the territory of our Republic, and 91 days since we moved to the highest anti-epidemic emergency level to prevent the rapid spread of the disease nationwide.

During this time the entire Party, the whole country and all the people, by displaying an indefatigable will and desperate efforts, have overcome the serious crisis and achieved great success in stabilizing and restoring the situation.

Our Party and government have assessed the

prevailing situation in the fight against the epidemic and, on the basis of the detailed analysis submitted by the scientific research sector, reached the conclusion that the epidemic crisis that was prevalent in the country has been completely eradicated.

Reviewing the situation to date since the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic system was put in place, the daily number of fever cases, which reached hundreds of thousands in the early days of the spread of the virus, fell to fewer than 90 000 one month later. The number then continued to decrease, and since July 29 no suspect case has been reported.

In total, 74 people have died during this period. This is a record low in terms of the fatality rate, and it can be called an unheard-of miracle in the world public health sector.

Until yesterday no case has been reported anywhere in the country for 12 consecutive days, and seven days have passed since the last recovery was reported.

Thus, the goal of our struggle against the epidemic, which aimed at turning our territory into a clean one free from the virus in the shortest possible time, has been attained.

The conditions have been created for basically

preventing the recurrence of the disease in the country. This is a reliable basis for our conviction that the crisis is over.

First, the disease was eliminated at source, with the last patients being restored to health and confirmed to be negative by a nucleic acid test. A climate of thoroughly observing the epidemic prevention regulations was created, and disinfection work stepped up throughout society. The various channels via which the disease could spread were blocked.

Also, on the basis of scientific and conclusive confirmation of the channel by which the stealth omicron variant entered our country, the work of locking down, isolation and observation has been further intensified. In addition, the system of collecting and burning or burying refuse immediately after it has been discovered to be infected and the work of guaranteeing that imports are virus-free have been strengthened so as to ensure that no mutated virus from outside can make inroads into our country. This is another important basis for our conviction.

All the confirmed cases reported in this period were found to be caused by the stealth omicron variant BA.2, and it has been verified that no new

variant or sub-type of the virus has occurred in or entered our country.

All the facts give us full conviction that our country has put an end to the crisis caused by the virus.

At this time, when we are confirming with great joy that our state and people have overcome the unprecedented public health crisis and finally returned to stability and peace, I, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and the government of our Republic, declare that we have achieved victory in the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign to exterminate the novel coronavirus that entered our territory and to defend the life and health of the people.

That we have kept the state and people safe from the most dangerous crisis in the global public sector, one that has driven the whole world into a catastrophic situation, and eliminated in such a short period the gravest and most threatening challenge that faced us, is another brilliant victory and a historic event that has demonstrated to the whole world once again the great strength of our Party, state and people.

In relation to this, our Party and government are today downgrading the anti-epidemic emergency from the highest level, which was put in place on May 12,

to that of an intensified and reinforced normal epidemic prevention system.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I extend warm congratulations to all the people and service personnel across the country who, when the crossroads of life or death was reached, displayed an indomitable faith, unyielding perseverance and genuine unity and protected themselves, as well as the safety and peace of everyone else and the health and laughter of our children, and thus brought the anti-epidemic war to a victorious conclusion.

Comrades,

Though we are now filled with unimaginable delight and sense of dignity, I do not know why, but I am once again reminded of the indescribable stress and sense of responsibility that have weighed on me so heavily to date.

The past 91 days could never be described as a long period in the history of our struggle, but they were a time of continuous stifling tension and grave war in the true sense of the words, in which I felt that each passing day were one, nay, ten years.

I was truly tormented by various thoughts when the malignant virus entered our country, after it had remained safe for over two years by building a

super-strong emergency epidemic prevention wall and making persevering efforts since the initial days of the pandemic.

This was because I had a people whom I must defend without fail, even at the cost of my life.

They supported me in both good times and bad; they encouraged me and lifted me up when times were hard. For me, every one of them was part of my flesh and blood, which I could, and must, never lose.

The unfolding crisis in which the daily number of new cases jumped by hundreds of thousands was a national crisis of the utmost urgency and severity, which compelled us to be on maximum alert and exert ourselves with a do-or-die determination, anticipating even the worst case scenario that the country might perish.

The foundations of our anti-epidemic work and public health sector were weak, and we had little experience in this work. In this situation, we were faced with the heavy historic tasks of taking action to win in the war against the raging malignant virus which was directly threatening the safety of the state and the lives of tens of millions of our people, of ensuring that the state organs, though they lacked ability in responding to the war, moved sensitively and

performed their proper functions and role in the campaign in which every minute and second counted, and of prioritizing what we did in order to reverse the tide of dire trials besetting the overall affairs of the state and the people's livelihood. These tasks were, in essence, a stern touchstone for testing once again our Party's leadership ability.

In the face of this first-ever national crisis of its type, our Party was deeply mindful of the great trust of the people and remained faithful to its inherent stance and attitude of serving them. By displaying to the full its uniquely resolute and powerful political leadership capacity, it intensified the state's anti-epidemic discipline and organized and led to victory the campaign for stamping out the virus.

Comrades,

The firm mutual belief of the Party and people linked by ties of blood has created a great miracle.

The clear reality of today, when we are declaring victory in the war against the epidemic, proves without doubt that our policy was right and our struggle principles were correct.

In other words, the priceless victory we have achieved is the victory of our Party's anti-epidemic policy, the victory of our state's crisis management

strategy, and the victory of our people's unique fortitude and single-hearted unity; it is a great victory achieved thanks to the superiority of our unique socialist system.

I can confirm this proudly and with a sense of dignity.

It is the consistent principle of our Party in its activities to adopt and implement its policies in the interests of the people, from their viewpoint and according to their stance, by always placing them first in its consideration.

Once the highest anti-epidemic emergency level was adopted as soon as the disease entered our territory, our Party and government promptly announced the most effective and optimum policies for overcoming the crisis. These included managing the situation at the outbreak of the disease, isolating the source of its spread, and stabilizing the people's livelihood.

However, perfect results cannot be expected from even a correct policy without a high sense of organization, voluntary unity of action, and purposeful enthusiasm on the part of the entire population to guarantee its implementation.

Whenever I think of the hard-fought victory in the

highest-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign, I am reminded first of all of the efforts of our people, who absolutely supported and empathized with the anti-epidemic policy of our Party and government and implemented it through their single-minded unity.

Under the emergency situation in which the rings of the anti-epidemic wall we had established despite severe losses were broken through and the virus entered our territory and spread, the most pressing matter was to act immediately to eliminate the source of the spread as soon as possible by bringing the situation under stable control and management, and quickly curing those infected.

Therefore, we were obliged to adopt strong measures for locking down every region and every unit across the country, while simultaneously pushing ahead with the work of identifying, isolating and treating every last fever case through strict and intensive screening and testing of the entire population.

It meant hardship and difficulties many times greater than anything in the past for all the families and citizens, not to mention the affairs of the state, as all visits and movement were prohibited throughout the territory, not just in some parts or regions of the

country, to the point that the rhythm of normal work and activities was destroyed.

However, our people displayed the outstanding trait of accepting as the intention of our Party all the regulations and directives issued in relation to the emergency anti-epidemic work. Regarding doing so as a patriotic undertaking for the country and as a natural duty and mission for the sake of their families and for themselves, they observed them voluntarily and conscientiously and executed them without fail.

All the citizens willingly postponed their personal and family affairs and displayed their unique spirit of fortitude, filled with confidence in and optimism about victory over the epidemic, without the slightest vacillation, weakness, pessimism or fear.

In order to save people from the threat of the disease at the earliest possible date and without delay, the Party and government made it the top priority to release the reserve medicines of the state and supply them to every part of the country so that the needed medicines could reach all those infected, and ensured that scientific treatment approaches and methods were put in place and applied.

As a result, from the fifth day after putting the highest anti-epidemic emergency level in place, we

reversed the nationwide spread of the disease and brought it into a containable, manageable and stable phase. This put us in a good position to win the war against the epidemic.

The Party and government also worked proactively and in a coordinated manner to re-adjust the anti-epidemic policy and guidelines so as to relieve the people of any inconvenience and suffering and reduce the negative impact on the affairs of the state and economic activity, according to changes in the anti-epidemic work situation.

Looking back on the time of the highest anti-epidemic emergency level, we can say that, in minimizing the damage from the virus and hastening the great victory in the war against the epidemic, it was highly significant that we pushed forward in parallel the measures for enforcing lockdowns and the fight to stamp out the virus, adopted strong state measures for producing and supplying medicines, combined strictness with scientific accuracy in the anti-epidemic work, and adopted positive measures for providing for the people's livelihood.

What is more important, however, is that the high sense of organization and voluntary unity of action unique to our people made it possible to thoroughly

implement and bring to perfect fruition the correct anti-epidemic policy and guidelines of the Party and government.

There are no other such outstanding people as ours in trusting their Party and government, in understanding the country's situation, in remaining sincere to their civic duty, and in overcoming difficulties through perseverance.

By curbing so quickly the violent spread of the virus and restoring stability in anti-epidemic work, we could make the whole country, where not a single vaccine had been administered, a clean, virus-free zone. This is a miracle worthy of note in the history of international health care.

This is without doubt a great victory for our unique style of people-oriented and scientific anti-epidemic policy, and for the joint efforts of all the people who unanimously responded to the policy with a resolve to implement it.

Our victory in the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign would have been inconceivable also without our socialist system's unique advantages and might.

Our country, because it has the ideological and volitional unity of all the people, who are the masters

of the state and society, is possessed of an inexhaustible strength with which it can powerfully counter any crisis, with the whole country and all the people rising up simultaneously.

It is the key political and institutional superiority, unique to our society, that every sector and unit in the country upholds without question the decisions and directives of the state and keeps in perfect step with them.

In addition to this, the collectivist spirit of one for all and all for one and the tenderness and human feeling of sharing sorrow and caring for one another even more the harder the times are, permeate the whole society, and this enables our system to display an invincible might that others will never possess.

It is because we have this institutional background that, immediately after the Party and government announced the decision to switch over to the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic system, strict measures could be adopted to lock down the whole country city by city, county by county and to isolate work, production and living units from one another. In addition, more intense anti-epidemic regulations, order and discipline could be established, ensuring that we were able to take the strategic initiative in the

ensuing war against the epidemic.

All the Party organizations and government organs turned out to look after the fever cases by supplying medicines even to out-of-the-way posts and families, and to ease people's inconvenience as far as possible by organizing various types of mobile service groups during the lockdown; this, too, would be inconceivable, separated from our system.

In this situation, our country's public health system demonstrated its people-oriented character and vitality to the full.

Even though the material and technical foundations of our public health sector are weak, our unique medical service system was able to operate effectively, and as a result the formidable anti-epidemic and treatment tasks could be fulfilled with success.

Based on the district doctor, emergency medical service, telemedicine and other people-oriented and advanced medical service systems, the identification of fever cases, and the screening and testing of the entire population could be undertaken every day, and proper quarantine and treatment could be carried out. This has been a major factor in stabilizing the anti-epidemic situation and eliminating the source of

infection on a nationwide scale.

Those who went to the greatest trouble and performed feats in achieving victory in the war against the epidemic, were the workers in the anti-epidemic and public health sectors.

Even though it is their natural duty, the burden and pain experienced by those standing in the frontline trench in the fight against the dangerous malicious infection can be said to have been enormous.

Our anti-epidemic and public health fighters never hesitated to devote themselves to the anti-epidemic campaign for safeguarding the lives of the people, which was entrusted to them by the Party and the state. None of them shrank back or gave up; rather, they all remained faithful to their duty to the end.

The spiritual strength with which they managed to keep going, and devoted and exerted themselves in the fight against the virulent disease derived from their warm love for human beings, their spirit of boundless self-sacrifice for their patients, their high sense of responsibility for their revolutionary tasks, and their sincerity.

During the period of the highest anti-epidemic emergency level, more than 71 200 public health workers and over 1 148 000 hygiene activists were

mobilized across the country every day to screen and test families and employees and to identify and treat fever cases, while thousands of former public health workers volunteered for this effort. All of them worked hard, displaying with the above-mentioned true spirit of anti-epidemic and public health fighters.

In particular, the Korean People's Army medics who were seconded to the capital city on the special order of the Party Central Military Commission performed outstanding feats on the front line of defending the people.

It was thanks to the devoted efforts of these medics, who were filled with a passionate loyalty to live up to the Party's trust and expectations, whatever the cost, and with ardent love for the people, that not only could the supply of medicines in the capital city be stabilized and the epidemic situation reversed, but also the people's absolute trust in the Party and the precious traditions of army-people unity could be defended.

I am delighted that the medics carried out with such credit the order of the Party Central Committee by working day and night, and that the citizens of the capital city came to regard our army as their

life-savers and their own kith and kin.

During this public health crisis, the number of deaths in the country was remarkably small, compared with the number of infections. This was because our anti-epidemic and public health workers defied death to implement the anti-epidemic and public health policies of the Party and government, displaying endeavour and devotion far beyond anything that could have been expected of them.

The anti-epidemic and public health workers across the country, despite a burden that was countless times greater than they were accustomed to, devoted themselves heart and soul, 24-7, never leaving their anti-epidemic posts and treatment places.

Our medical workers are faithful to the Party and people, and among them there are many doctors and nurses who devoted themselves to the residents and patients in their charge before taking care of their own bed-ridden husbands and children. There are also other medical workers who donated their strength and courage to their patients by preparing for them medicines that were in short supply, and even daily necessities.

There is nothing more impressive than the deeds of the anti-epidemic and public health workers who

devoted even their last breath to the cause of victory in the anti-epidemic war and the complete recovery of their patients, thinking first of their mission and duty as protectors of human life, even though they knew they themselves were sick.

They are genuine public health workers and patriots of our era, on a par with the frontline doctors and nurses of the Fatherland Liberation War and the red public health workers of the Chollima era.

Our Party and government always remember the devotion and exploits of the combatants who are reliably defending their anti-epidemic posts across the country, including those in the frontline, border and coastal areas, not just during the period of the highest anti-epidemic emergency level, but right from the start of the epidemic prevention work.

With full awareness of their sense of responsibility and duty for defending the safety of the state and people, the Party delegates and guidance team members who have been dispatched to the emergency anti-epidemic front on the special order of the Party and government, the many soldiers of the KPA, the officers of the public security and state security organs and members of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards enlisted for lockdown and quarantine duties, and the

members of anti-epidemic teams in various places have made a great contribution to consolidating the anti-epidemic wall and establishing the social climate of observing the anti-epidemic regulations, while overcoming all the difficulties despite the severe heat and heavy rain.

The self-sacrificing spirit displayed by the workers in the public health sector and the combatants at the anti-epidemic frontline posts in this period of the highest anti-epidemic emergency level will be proudly recorded in the history of our Party's struggle and of our country.

The advantages and vitality of our unique socialist system were demonstrated in a concentrated manner through the communist virtues and traits displayed more warmly and ardently by our people in the period of the highest anti-epidemic emergency level.

At the grim moment when the whole country was facing the threat from the virulent disease, the Party's and government's greatest anxiety was not only the health of the tens of millions of people, but also the inconvenience and difficulties they inevitably had to experience owing to the intense lockdown and quarantine measures.

That is why the Party Central Committee, regarding

our society's tenderness and human feeling of helping and caring for one another in the face of hardship as more powerful than any state-of-the-art medical science and technology and the key to a great victory in the anti-epidemic work, called on all the Party members and other people to give fuller play to our most excellent communist virtues and traits.

It is the norm for our people to perform beautiful deeds because, in the embrace of our Party and the socialist system, collectivism and love for human beings is as natural to them as breathing the air. Even so, the moving stories born of the recent anti-epidemic campaign have made us feel more keenly how warm and precious our society is.

It is a matter of great regret that I cannot mention here every beautiful moving story and noble personality.

To cite some examples: The employees and officials at some factories worked day and night to provide medicines and foodstuffs to those infected with the virus; some people disposed of their family property to prepare goods needed by those in hostels, students' dormitories, orphanages and baby homes; and still some others selflessly shared their food grain, subsidiary foodstuffs and daily necessities with

families and neighbours in need.

Such benevolent supporters are everywhere—in the capital city and provinces, at factories and in rural and fishermen's villages—and include broad sections of society, ranging from respected war veterans to ordinary working people, heads of people's neighbourhood units, housewives and even children's union members.

Thinking of one's comrades, neighbours and the collective before oneself and devoting one's all for them despite one's own hunger in the difficult situation like now—this world of beautiful virtues has showcased the harmony and bonds of human feelings in our society, the true value of which can never be measured in terms of money or wealth.

I derived incomparable encouragement from our people, the most excellent people in the world, who shared the same intentions and feelings with the Party Central Committee and regarded it as a source of their pleasure and pride to devote themselves for the sake of others, and I further hardened my conviction that we can surely emerge victorious in the face of any crisis and trial as long as we have such people.

That the whole country moves as one, united in one mind and one will behind the Party and government,

and that tenderness and human feeling based on collectivism are a national trait—this is the superiority and might unique to our style of socialism, and the reason we could overcome with such ease this unprecedented crisis and win a great victory.

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Party and the government of the Republic, I express great appreciation to the workers in the anti-epidemic and public health sectors across the country who have worked so hard and played such an active role, devoting their strength, wisdom and sincerity in hastening victory in the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign to safeguard the safety of the state and people from the enormous public health crisis. I also extend warm thanks to all the service personnel, officials and workers who have gone to such great pain in defence of the anti-epidemic wall and the supporters who have given both material and spiritual encouragement in the anti-epidemic work.

Comrades,

We have achieved victory not only on the emergency anti-epidemic front but also on the economic front and in overall state affairs.

The malignant epidemic situation arose after several years of epidemic prevention work, which

made matters worse; this was a huge obstacle and a disaster that might have caused extreme disruption to state and social life and economic construction. Yet with our tenacity, we prevailed, and ensured without a hitch the expected speed of development while maintaining the normal state of affairs. This on its own constitutes a great victory.

When it declared that the national epidemic prevention work would be raised to the highest anti-epidemic emergency level, our Party decided to push forward with both the emergency anti-epidemic campaign and the tasks planned for this year without interruption, believing in the indomitable spiritual strength and creativity of our people; this decision has been implemented.

The most important farming processes in agricultural production, which was designated as an urgent task in this year's economic work, were completed satisfactorily and in time.

Because it started in spring, a crucial period for farming in the year, the recent highest-level emergency anti-epidemic war created a direct obstacle in the production activities of agricultural workers and gave rise to a situation in which nationwide labour assistance could not be arranged as

planned in the rice-transplanting season, which is the busiest farming period.

However, our agricultural workers, filled with a determination and enthusiasm for fulfilling their responsibilities and duties without fail in what is the first year of implementing the new rural revolution programme, overcame the febrile disease and recorded the remarkable achievement of finishing the enormous rice-transplanting task ahead of schedule entirely through their own efforts by displaying a previously unimaginable spiritual strength in refusing to yield.

This was a great encouragement to all the other working people across the country, and came as happy news for the people waging the arduous anti-epidemic campaign.

Although the demands of the anti-epidemic work became stricter and materials could not be transported and supplied smoothly, all the builders engaged in major projects, including the large-scale housing construction in the capital city and the Ryonpho Greenhouse Farm, persevered with their projects, pushing ahead with them as planned, thus providing a firm guarantee for completing them by the set date.

Such key sectors as the metallurgical, chemical,

electric power, coal and machine-building industries, and rail transport and light industry have generally fulfilled their daily, ten-day and monthly production plans, although they faced double the difficulty in securing labour and materials, thereby preventing economic stagnation and taking great strides towards achieving the goals for this year.

That we ensured the smooth progress of overall state affairs even in the emergency situation, is another priceless success.

Party, administrative and economic organs, the judicial and prosecutorial sectors, and the public security, state security and national defence sectors gained practical experience in carrying out their work in a flexible and efficient manner, while promptly establishing the emergency work system, identifying defects, gaps and deviations and adopting measures to combat them, in keeping with the operation of the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic system.

In particular, I think it is excellent that the officials of Party organizations, government organs and all other sectors and units realized what embodying people-first politics and serving the people unconditionally mean in the course of unquestioningly obeying the directives of the Party

and government and thoroughly implementing people-oriented policies.

In getting through the recent unexpected public health crisis, we have made mistakes and learned lessons in our work, and these constitute a precious asset in coping effectively with any crises we may face in the future.

The lessons we have drawn can generally be condensed into two areas.

One is that we should maintain a high degree of tension without permitting the slightest carelessness and slackness as the anti-epidemic work continues; the other is that we should at all costs scrupulously build a national emergency preparedness and response capability, an anti-epidemic capability.

The fact is, if we had observed the anti-epidemic regulations and guidelines we had already introduced, we could have isolated and contained the fever cases on the frontline in Kumgang County, where the recent epidemic crisis started.

However, the deadly disease which initially affected two individuals penetrated even the capital, due to the latent carelessness and slackness in the epidemic prevention sector, creating the grave situation of a nationwide spread.

Some people believed that there could be no gap through which the malignant virus could enter, since a tight quarantine network had been established in the frontline, border and coastal areas by committing a large number of people, and an epidemic prevention system involving all the people had been created. It was this self-delusion, carelessness, self-appeasement and relaxation of vigilance that created the recent serious challenge and crisis.

Complacency, idleness and indolence and a proclivity to think that nothing bad would happen clouded people's judgement when the epidemic was making its initial inroads.

Its nationwide spread might well have been prevented if the response had been instantaneous, considering any subtle abnormal signs as being directly connected with the destiny of the state from the viewpoint of "if" rather than "won't," and if the work was carried out with confidence while maintaining composure and a sense of responsibility in the face of the unexpected situation.

In the recent war against the epidemic, we became keenly aware that if we continue to cling to the formalistic and mechanical attitude and way of working, departing from a scientific way of thinking

and action, we are fated to suffer in any health crisis that may break out in the future.

We must never forget this lesson.

As everyone saw in the initial period when the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic system was put in place, even easily-preventable loss of life occurred and we could not promptly contain the spread of the epidemic in the country since we had failed to establish and carry out testing for the virus, or diagnosis and scientific treatment properly and without delay. There were even superstitions and rumours circulating which caused considerable confusion in the anti-epidemic work and medical treatment.

We worked mechanically by clinging solely to physical lockdown, while failing to address all the links in the anti-epidemic chain according to scientific principles, to identify the source, estimate and predict outcomes and to adopt active and flexible measures. This aggravated the livelihood of the people and the stagnation of economic work, and we were compelled to straighten out what we could have prevented beforehand.

In addition, there were various other problems; the state of our public health and anti-epidemic work, or to be more specific, our public health and

anti-epidemic infrastructure and technical and material preparedness, have failed to develop in line with the public health and anti-epidemic policies which our Party and state have pursued consistently since the founding of our Republic, and are not ready to respond promptly to sudden events.

As all of us experienced, we should engrave deeply in our minds how urgently and badly needed are the essential response capability on the part of the anti-epidemic and public health sectors, once a fever outbreak is reported.

In the final analysis, our anti-epidemic capability is synonymous with our national security capability and our capability to defend the lives of the people.

To review matters so far, we can classify into three types the objective crises that we should always prioritize and foresee in promoting national development and stepping up socialist construction.

War, epidemics and natural disasters—these are the three major crises that we must surely cope with in a responsible manner for the sake of the survival and development of the state and the wellbeing of the people.

As far as our war deterrent is concerned, our Party and state have long directed powerful, primary efforts

to it; and we are working vigilantly to build the mobilization capability and potential with which to minimize the damage from natural disasters.

The most important matter now is to build the anti-epidemic capability for coping with the global health crisis.

Therefore, the Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Eighth Party Central Committee identified building up the state's anti-epidemic capability as an urgent task.

Since the major policy-oriented tasks concerning the state's anti-epidemic capability building have already been decided and assigned, I would like to emphasize some key points.

We have declared victory in the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign, but this does not mean that there is no danger of an epidemic spreading or the state emergency anti-epidemic effort ending.

As the mass media report every day, the public health crises in the areas surrounding our country and the rest of the world have not yet passed, so it is too early to feel relieved and relax our anti-epidemic measures.

Over a dozen subvariants which are stronger than the stealth omicron variant, which spread in our country, in terms of transmissibility and immunity

evasion, and which have not changed greatly in terms of their severity and deadliness, are breaking out in succession across the world, resulting in surging infection number and a rising death rate.

To make matters worse, a public health emergency of international concern was declared, with the highly dangerous monkeypox spreading to dozens of countries, and the possible outbreak of various infectious diseases owing to climate change is also arousing the anxiety of humankind.

This shows that there is no reason whatsoever for us to celebrate the positive results we have achieved and to feel conceited or relax, and it highlights the necessity to continue stepping up the anti-epidemic campaign in order to thoroughly defend the country's security and the people's wellbeing.

We have to maintain the impregnability of our anti-epidemic wall and invest a high-intensity anti-epidemic effort until the global health crisis ends, at the same time as following up the achievements and victory in the recent highest-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign.

First of all, we should pay due attention to maintaining all-people anti-epidemic awareness and vigilance.

Since the broad sections of the masses are masters of the campaign and victory in it is decided by their consciousness, it is essential to step up anti-epidemic information work and education in every way so that the society-wide anti-epidemic climate will never weaken or be dampened.

We should be sparing in our use of the word *victory* today when we have won victory, for the sake of declaring a greater victory tomorrow and, more importantly, we should focus on being vigilant and active.

Congratulating ourselves on our victory in the highest-level emergency anti-epidemic war may allow room for slackness, carelessness and inattention to raise their heads again. Therefore, all Party and working people's organizations, administrative and economic sectors and law-enforcement organs should be on the alert and direct their efforts to maintaining public awareness of the anti-epidemic work and crisis.

However great the intensity of anti-epidemic information work and explanation may be, they will give rise to boredom and be treated as routine if stereotyped phrases are repeated.

Therefore, the information and ideological campaigns should be stepped up so as to consolidate

the people's anti-epidemic awareness and improve their habitual observance of the anti-epidemic regulations on the basis of the data changing according to the worldwide anti-epidemic situation and analyses of the actual state of our anti-epidemic efforts.

At the same time, organizational, administrative and legal steps should be taken against the practices of violating the anti-epidemic guidelines and order, so as to make our anti-epidemic work a sure and reliable undertaking supported by the consciousness of the masses, plus strong legal guarantees.

Next, we should continue to concentrate on maintaining and consolidating our impregnable anti-epidemic wall so as to prevent any malignant virus from infiltrating the country again.

It is important to ensure the perfection of our quarantine efforts by re-examining the overall multiple quarantine walls in the border, frontline and coastal areas and in the seas and air, reinforcing where it is needed and imposing isolation where necessary according to the varying character of the pandemic.

And here, too, primary attention should be directed to the provision of services and living conditions, along with ideological mobilization and encouragement, for those who are performing

quarantine duties at checkpoints so that our anti-epidemic front line not only is perfect ideologically, spiritually, operationally, tactically and epidemiologically, but also maintains the highest level in terms of responsibility and vigilance.

As I have mentioned above, an important task for us is to give a spur to building our state's anti-epidemic capability.

The public health emergency of international concern is serious now, but more challenging health crises are expected to occur periodically and repeatedly.

In the future, too, we have no reason for concluding that there is no danger of such a public health nightmare recurring, and for taking things easy.

It would be foolish of us to neglect or slow down the development of our anti-epidemic capability simply because, having won the recent anti-epidemic war, we are finding the current situation very difficult. Doing so would bring about irrevocable consequences.

In view of the demands of the people-first principle, the political ideal of our Party, the true nature of our system which values the people most and the bitter lessons taught by the recent public health crisis, we need to forge ahead powerfully with

developing our anti-epidemic capability so as to raise it to the world level without fail.

This is the steadfast will of our Party and government.

We should fully systematize the anti-epidemic policy and guidelines we have creatively enforced and the experiences and lessons we have gained and, on this basis, continue to step up our research into the theoretical and practical, scientific and technical problems arising in developing our anti-epidemic work in order to make it more advanced and people-oriented.

We should further perfect the national anti-epidemic system and order and push ahead with the efforts to prepare adequate anti-epidemic forces and material and technical means in a foresighted and realistic manner.

We should pay special attention to directing untiring and planned efforts into training professional anti-epidemic workers and improving their qualifications, developing and providing scientific testing and measuring equipment, and establishing specialist quarantine and treatment facilities in different parts of the country.

As I have already pointed out, Koryo medicine and

other pharmaceutical factories and medical appliance factories in various places should be renovated, their production capacities expanded, and the construction of medical consumables and anti-epidemic medical supplies factories stepped up.

We should also work effectively for the step-by-step modernization of hospitals across the country and for bringing pharmacies up to standard so that they can provide the people with a high level of health care.

By doing all this, we can ensure that our people lead a happy life in good health free from any disease by enjoying the substantial benefits and the protection of the best public health system and anti-epidemic system under the most advantageous socialist system.

Comrades,

In implementing the crucial policy-oriented tasks facing the anti-epidemic and public health sectors, the red anti-epidemic and public health workers of the Party, who are in direct charge of it, have a vital role to play.

In the course of the recent worst-ever health crisis, our people witnessed the selfless struggle of our medical workers and saw them in a fresh light, so that they came to regard them as guardians of the best

social system in the world and as reliable protectors of their lives.

The anti-epidemic and public health workers should cherish the people's trust and appreciation as a treasure more precious than anything else, which can never be bartered, and should redouble their efforts to continue living up to it.

They should become genuine communists who are imbued with infinite loyalty to the mission assigned them by the Party, with warm human love and with sincere devotion to their patients and work heart and soul to apply in full the advantages of our social system in their anti-epidemic and healthcare work.

Comrades,

We have become strong once again in the course of withstanding the trials and, if more challenges and difficulties stand in our way, we will become stronger while resolutely overcoming them, too.

No one could have imagined three months ago, when the announcement was made that the virus had entered our country, that today's event would come so soon.

Thanks to our benevolent people, who placed all their hopes in our Party and turned out staunchly with boundless loyalty to it and an indomitable will to

overcome any trials cheerfully, and to the might of their single-hearted unity, we are able to advance towards a greater victory by making the recent public health crisis an opportunity for development and a leap forward, rather than regarding it as a period of despair and frustration.

I express sincere appreciation for the trust and encouragement of our people, the constant source of my infinite strength and courage, and I harden my resolve to make strenuous efforts even at the risk of my life for the safety and happiness of such excellent people.

We should work hard to achieve even greater success not only on the emergency anti-epidemic front but also in all fields of socialist construction by demonstrating to the full the limitless potential we so clearly displayed during the recent event.

If we further mobilize and promote the indomitable spiritual strength of our people who have courageously overcome the worst-ever crisis, we can successfully attain the goals of the five-year plan set out by the Eighth Party Congress as well as the fighting goals we have laid down for this year.

Let us all dependably guarantee the safety of our state and people with a firm conviction in and

optimism about our struggle and future, and dynamically step up the great historic cause of achieving the comprehensive development of our unique style of socialism.

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to extend greetings once again with a feeling of humble reverence to the most respected and beloved people.

I sincerely wish all of them good health and all the families across the country, peace.

Long live our great people!

KIM JONG UN

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THE SAFETY OF THE STATE AND PEOPLE
BY FOLLOWING UP THE SUCCESSES
WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE WAR
AGAINST THE EPIDEMIC**

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