

**“Equal Access to Health and Medical Services on COVID-19 for All! Japan Network  
Press Release**

**Foreign Minister Motegi says Japan has "no intention to obstruct" the Negotiation of  
WTO IP Waiver proposal on COVID-19, Steps in to reconsider Its "Opposition" Position**

(Tokyo, May 26, 2021) COVID-19 Pandemic has become more serious worldwide due to mutated strains. In order to address this challenge, a negotiation has continued for more than half a year on the proposal of partial and temporary waiver of COVID-19 related intellectual property rights, co-submitted by the 62 countries led by South Africa and India. On May 5, the Biden administration of the U.S. expressed its support for the proposal and its intention to actively participate in the discussions.

Following the policy change of the US government, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi stated in the Diet on May 25, "Japan has no intention to obstruct the negotiation while other countries have been making positive efforts in this area". Japan, along with the U.S. and the European Union, has so far taken the position of opposing this proposal, but Foreign Minister Motegi's statement that Japan won't oppose the progress of negotiation on this proposal at the WTO indicated a step further to reconsidering the position.

The Minister's statement was made at the 13th meeting of the House of Councillors' Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, in response to a question by Mr. Satoshi Inoue, a member of the House of Councillors, Japanese Communist Party. The minister also stressed the importance of active involvement in developing solutions to the global crisis of COVID-19 without limitation, saying, "Japan would like to discuss how we can resolve various bottlenecks globally". On the other hand, he refrained from stating Japan's position on the WTO's IPR exemption proposal itself, saying, "it depends on the specific contents of the waiver of patent rights."

The video of Minister Motegi's speech can be viewed on the House of Councillors website.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defense, the House of Councillors

- URL <https://www.webtv.sangiin.go.jp/webtv/detail.php?sid=6389>
- Time: 1 hour and 43 minutes-1 hour and 55 minutes
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