

Chapter 2 Promotion of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Overcoming health issues that threaten human lives and hinder all kinds of social, cultural, and economic activities is a common global challenge directly linked with human security. Human security is a concept that supplements that of national security; it focuses on individual human beings with the aim of creating a community where people can be released from fear and scarcity, and live fulfilled with dignity. Japan has advocated human security, which underlines the “Proactive Contribution to Peace.” and has acted in support of that principle. Japan regards health as its indispensable element.

Section 1 Basic Design for Peace and Health

In response to the formulation of the “Development Cooperation Charter” in February 2015, the Headquarters for Healthcare Policy established the “Basic Design for Peace and Health” in September of the same year as a guideline for global health policy. This Basic Design sets out, as its policy goals, establishing resilient global health governance able to respond to public health crises and natural disasters, seamless utilization of essential health and medical services; promotion of UHC throughout life-cycle, utilizing Japanese expertise, experience, medical products and technologies. Based on this policy, Japan has led discussions in the international community, keeping in mind the goal of achieving UHC that ensures that all people can receive the health services needed at an affordable cost throughout life.

Specifically, at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit held in May

2016, UHC was listed as a priority issue for the first time in the history of the G7/G8 Summits, contributing to the sharing of the understanding that UHC plays an indispensable role in strengthening preparedness towards a pandemic such as Ebola Virus Disease (“G7 Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health”). To ensure that this Vision is also steadily implemented in Africa, at the TICAD VI held in August 2016, Japan, the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), and other organizations jointly drew up and announced “UHC in Africa” as a policy framework for promoting UHC in Africa. Furthermore, Japan also played a leading role in the establishment of “UHC2030,” which further develops the previous aid cooperation framework in the health field to achieve UHC by 2030.

Section 2 Convening of the UHC Forum 2017

During the UN General Assembly in September 2017, Japan hosted an event to promote UHC. At the event, Prime Minister Abe shared the following recognition with leaders driving the global health sector—that the achievement of UHC, positioned as an international goal under the SDGs, not only contributes to resolving health issues, but also reduces disparities and helps to develop a foundation for people’s lives, and therefore, plays an extremely important role in achieving many of the targets set out under the SDGs. He also called for greater interest towards the importance of UHC in the international community. Furthermore, at the UHC Forum 2017 held in Tokyo in December 2017, he emphasized the importance of strengthening momentum towards promoting UHC promoting collaboration with governments and donors, continuous monitoring, mobilization of domestic resources and international assistance, and promoting innovation in the global health sector, in accelerating the promotion of UHC. He

also declared that Japan provides assistance to a total of \$2.9 billion, in order to support the efforts of countries and organizations to achieve UHC.

Japan is a frontrunner in promoting UHC. Japan can concretely contribute toward promoting the “proactive



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe delivering a speech at UHC Forum 2017, held in Tokyo in December 2017 (Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

contribution to peace” and achieving of the SDGs by showing its continuous leadership in UHC, which commit to the achievement of SDGs’ principal: “Human security”

and “No one left behind.” It also leads to enhance these efforts enhancing Japan’s “soft power” in the international society.

Section 3 Cross-Disciplinary Initiatives

Multi-sectional approach is required to achieve UHC that Japan has committed. UHC should also be pursued in the context of social changes such as concentration of the population into urban areas and population aging, which is mainly observed in Asia. In 2015, Japan adopted the “Basic Policy for Asia Health and Human Well-Being Initiative.” Japan will continue to share its experiences in UHC for an aging society—fostered through its national

health insurance system and long-term care insurance system—with its counterparts in Asia.

Japan has achieved the world’s highest healthy life expectancy and is further expected to play a proactive role in the area of health. Japan aims to realize the international community that enhances the people’s health as well as ensures the right to health through assisting the area of global health.

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Chapter 3 Promotion of the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus

In recent years, the humanitarian crises occurring in various parts of the world have become increasingly prolonged and complex. As of 2017, the number of people who have been forced to evacuate, including refugees, has hit a record high since World War II, and is continuing to rise. In particular, after the summer of 2015, the mass influx of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa to Europe has come under the spotlight, making the refugee crisis one of the most pressing issues that the international community has to address in earnest.

Section 1 Humanitarian Assistance for Prolonged and Complex Humanitarian Crises

In cases where a country is exposed to the threat of a humanitarian crisis that gives rise to refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), the first thing that has to be done is to offer humanitarian assistance by providing emergency shelter (simple tents), water, food, medical aid, etc.

However, it is important to have a medium- to long-term perspective which recognizes refugees and IDPs not only as subjects for protection, but rather as a group of people who will become self-reliant in the future and take on the responsibility of rebuilding their home countries. From this perspective, Japan places strong emphasis on engaging in “development cooperation” for refugees and IDPs from the initial phases of the humanitarian crisis, alongside with offering humanitarian assistance. In doing so, the two points listed below are particularly important.

(i) Support to refugees and IDPs to improve their independence and livelihoods

For instance, providing education to children, who play a key role in building the country in the future, is essential in the earliest stage of evacuation, and it is

vital to ensure that there are no periods of disruption to their education. Education and vocational trainings will contribute to accelerating the return of refugees and IDPs in the future, as well as their reintegration into society after their return.

(ii) Support for basic infrastructure (such as water supply, health and medical care, waste management, roads, etc.) for both refugees/IDPs and host communities, and support to improve administrative capabilities (particularly of local governments) for its management and operations

As a result of the mass influx of refugees and IDPs and the prolonged evacuation, social tensions between refugees and the host communities tend to arise frequently. However, ensuring that refugees and IDPs as well as host communities are able to gain access to the health and medical facilities provided through Japan’s support, for example, could lead to daily interaction between the two parties and contribute to easing of tensions between them.