

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan**

**At the Side Event “Delivering on Universal Health Coverage:  
Why the Time is Now”**

22 September 2014, New York

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my appreciation to all the distinguished guests from Member States, international organizations and civil society for attending this event.

As the deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draws near, we should be ready to continue our work together beyond 2015 to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages.

Today, we face numerous challenges in global health including major infectious diseases, maternal and child health concerns, the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), domestic inequality in access to health services, and public health crises such as the current Ebola outbreak.

As for the outbreak of Ebola, insufficient Primary Health Care has worsened the situation. From the perspective of Human Security, Japan has been extending approximately 5 million USD in emergency grant aid in cooperation with international organizations and dispatching four Japanese experts as members of the WHO Mission. In addition, we are negotiating with the WHO to send up to 23 Japanese experts additionally. Japan is currently considering further supports required for upcoming months, including providing an effective candidate drug developed by Fujifilm and Toyama Chemical Co., Ltd under certain conditions. We need concerted efforts to address this outbreak.

What do we need to tackle such complex and diversified health challenges today? It is my belief that Universal Health Coverage (UHC), a resilient health system available for all people, is a key to coping with those challenges.

UHC is intended to ensure that all people have access to the essential health services they need without suffering financial hardship. Furthermore, UHC seeks to eliminate disparities in access to quality and effective primary health care services, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized people.

UHC is also essential to address current and future aging societies in a number of regions. Aging societies without healthy longevity of people will encounter various problems, including increase in social security cost. A happy society should be where elderly people can enjoy healthy and active lives. UHC plays an indispensable role to realize such goal.

At the last session of the UN General Assembly, Japan hosted a side event entitled “Post-2015: Health and Development” at which Prime Minister Abe made a commitment to promote the mainstreaming of UHC beyond 2015. Japan, in collaboration with other global partners, has taken action to lead this movement.

Japan has worked with the World Bank and WHO to develop a UHC monitoring framework. This is making significant contributions to the reliability of UHC implementation efforts. Japan has also advocated the concept of UHC in cooperation with France and Thailand, and has made efforts to convince other Member States of the importance of UHC. As a result, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has come to recognize UHC with due significance.

At the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000, Japan became the first country among G8 members to raise the issue of infectious diseases, which are a grave concern in many developing countries. At the G8 Toyako Summit in 2008, we highlighted the importance of taking a comprehensive approach and strengthening health systems. In TICADV last year, Japan committed to capacity development of 120,000 people and assistance of 500 million USD in health sector.

I believe that “Now Is the Time” for us to move forward for health for all and for inclusive and sustainable development.

Japan has achieved rapid economic growth supported by its healthy and highly

educated population. Although approaches towards UHC vary according to each country's own circumstance, it is never too early for any country to aim for UHC regardless of its income levels or level of health coverage.

A UHC-oriented approach would be highly effective in accelerating the achievement of health-related goals in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. I hope this event will be a good opportunity to galvanize collaborative action toward realizing UHC beyond 2015.

Finally, allow me to express our sincere gratitude to the Rockefeller Foundation for its remarkable efforts to realize this event, as well as our appreciation for the cooperation from the WHO, World Bank, and the Governments of France and Chile.

Thank you for your kind attention.