

**Address by H.E. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan,
at the TICAD VI Side Event,
High-level Panel on UHC in Africa
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Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), Nairobi, Kenya

[Provisional Translation]

Honorable representatives of countries and distinguished heads of international organizations, it is my great pleasure to be able to co-host “UHC in Africa” today.

Since the previous Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the international community faced the Ebola virus disease crisis which highlighted the importance of building resilient health systems.

Based on this lesson, at TICAD VI, I am determined to cooperate with the leaders of Africa in order to strengthen each country’s health systems and work towards the achievement of universal health coverage (UHC).

At the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in May, bearing this TICAD in mind, I took initiative in leading the discussion on reinforcing the global health architecture, which will strengthen responses to public health emergencies, and on promoting UHC, which will also contribute to crisis preparedness.

The achievements of this discussion culminated in the groundbreaking “G7 Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health,” which presents a pathway and the determination of G7 leaders for solving the health challenges that face the world, including Africa.

Where response to public health crises is concerned, Japan supports the strengthening of the World Health Organization (WHO)’s crisis response capabilities – including its Contingency Fund for Emergencies. Japan also led the world in pledging funding for the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF), which was introduced in Sendai by the World Bank Group this year. This fund will enable the rapid mobilization of funding during public health crises and will be hugely beneficial for African countries. In parallel to such funds mobilization during crises, just like the two wheels of a cart, I anticipate the strengthening of crisis prevention and preparedness through the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA).

Japan has also proved it can take concrete actions in emergency response. Just recently, given the yellow fever outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Japan quickly dispatched the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Infectious Diseases Response Team and extended an Emergency Grant Aid.

Furthermore, over the past 40 years, Japan has supported the enhancement of infectious disease laboratories in Africa. As a result, today, with the rising recognition of Ghana’s Noguchi Memorial

Institute for Medical Research, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), University of Zambia and other institutions, Africa has become a distinguished hub for research and control of infectious diseases. By networking these laboratories, Japan will further contribute to the strengthening of Africa's capability in pandemic response.

Next, I want to talk about UHC, which contributes to crisis prevention and preparedness, as well as response. At TICAD V, I promoted UHC as a "Japan brand" concept and expressed our determination to lead international efforts in the field.

Given that, I powerfully put the spotlight on UHC at the G7 Summit for the first time ever. There, G7 supported the establishment of UHC 2030 which deepens cooperation towards UHC with a variety of efforts made by leading actors such as the Global Fund, and promotes an international health partnership with a particular focus on countries with low incomes and fragile health systems.

When it comes to strengthening a country's health systems, the single most important factor is the people in the country. In order to expand health services at national and regional level, Japan will draw upon its own experiences to support countries' policy and system reform as well as the training of personnel, in the respective policy challenge context of each country.

In Kenya, Japan is providing both financial and technical support in a multiplicity of causes. To name a few, we support the development of policy documents needed to achieve UHC by 2030, the achievement of free maternity service, which is being led by President Kenyatta, and the capacity development of policymakers and managers in the health sector at the national and regional level.

In Senegal, Japan will build upon the support it has extended thus far for maternal and child health and for strengthening the capacities of health care providers, and facilitate the achievement of UHC, as well as broaden its support in enhancing the country's health insurance system, which is a goal being promoted by President Sall.

In Ethiopia, as a result of Japan's assistance in strengthening infectious disease surveillance by involving local health workers and communities, the speed and quality of disease reporting in remote areas saw a remarkable improvement. Such efforts have received high appraisal. In cooperation with Ethiopia, Japan will strive for UHC that leaves no one behind.

Japan will actively contribute to ensuring that the initiatives of pioneering countries that serve as models for other countries spread to the entire African continent.

"UHC in Africa" which we will be discussing today will present guidelines and a concrete framework for action that will serve as references for achieving UHC under the ownership of respective countries, as well as by cooperation among the international society.

Together let us walk toward a healthier and more resilient Africa.

Thank you very much for your attention.