

- Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen,
- Thank you all for joining us today for this important meeting.
- It is my great pleasure to once again co-host this year' s Ministerial Meeting of Group of Friends on Universal Health Coverage, together with Thailand and Georgia.
- Global health has long been one of the main pillars of Japan' s foreign policy, and we are committed to promoting UHC to realize "human security."
- UHC not only directly impacts people' s health, but it also helps countries to confront major economic, social, and security risks.
- I would like to make two points today.
- First, UHC is indispensable in preparing for future health crises.

- Addressing infectious diseases requires international cooperation.
- In response to the recent Ebola virus outbreak, Japan has provided 8.5 million US dollars in emergency grants to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.
- The Government of Japan remains committed to provide necessary support.
- No one can predict the next health crisis.
- Building resilient health systems between crises is key.
- Therefore, we strongly hope that the High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, to be held the day after tomorrow, will further reaffirm and strengthen international cooperation, including the WHO Pandemic Agreement.

- Second, achieving UHC requires the establishment of resilient, sustainable, and self-reliant health systems that respect country ownership.
- Japan attaches particular importance to strengthening countries' "resilience" and enabling them to address their own development challenges in a sustainable manner.
- In this spirit, the Government of Japan is working with WHO and the World Bank, to advance the UHC Knowledge Hub initiative.
- The UHC Knowledge Hub supports capacity building for policy practitioners from Ministries of Health and Finance in low- and middle-income countries, aiming to strengthen health financing.
- Japan hosted the first in-person training in Tokyo in February, attended by senior officials from eight countries in Asia and Africa.

- Finally,
I would like to express my sincere appreciation
to the Government of Thailand,
as co-facilitator
of next year's UN General Assembly
High-Level Meeting on UHC.
- The Government of Japan remains firmly committed
to achieving UHC
and to contributing to
the success of the High-Level Meeting
on UHC next year.
- Thank you for your kind attention.