

**Ambassador's speech**  
**IPPF UHC report launch**  
**31<sup>st</sup> January 2019**

**Introduction and thank you greetings**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the Embassy of Japan. I would like to start by thanking you all for attending today, and in particular I would like to thank our co-hosts the International Planned Parenthood Federation, for all of their help in organising this timely event.

**Introduction to importance of health and UHC**

Health is the foundation of sustainable economic growth. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. However, while the progress of globalisation has brought great benefits to humanity, we have also witnessed growing concern and discontent over widening disparities. According to the 2017 Global Monitoring Report, at least half of the world population lacks access to essential health services and almost 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty due to their expenditure on health.

In this context, the promotion of health, especially Universal Health Coverage or UHC, is essential for addressing these challenges and achieving the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs; that is, the realisation of a society where “no one is left behind.”

**Details regarding Japan's efforts towards UHC**

Universal Health Coverage means that all people can obtain basic health services when they need them without suffering financial hardship. Japan achieved UHC in 1961, and has since been leading the discussion on UHC, based on the concept of “human security”, as one of the top priority issues in global health. Since the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000, global health has become a top agenda item to be discussed by global leaders.

In 2016, the Government of Japan set global health as a major pillar at both the G7 Ise-Shima Summit, and the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (known as TICAD), where we introduced “UHC in Africa”, a policy framework which presents a roadmap and actions for achieving UHC. Japan also launched the “International Health Partnership for UHC 2030” platform, which facilitates the coordination of various efforts towards UHC.

The following year, in 2017, Japan hosted the UHC Forum 2017 in Tokyo, which was attended by many global health leaders and government officials from over 30 countries, including Prime Minister Abe, and here we adopted the “Tokyo Declaration on Universal Health Coverage” to reaffirm our commitment and accelerate progress towards achieving the global goal of UHC.

However, while Japan’s firm commitment is clear, there is still a very long way to go for both national governments and international institutions. That is why Japan’s work with its global partners is so important, and today is an opportunity to celebrate one such example of this partnership.

### **IPPF and their report**

The Government of Japan and the International Planned Parenthood Federation have now been working together in partnership for about 50 years. Japan highly values the activities of the IPPF in providing Sexual and Reproductive Health services to those in desperate need around the world, and the vital role that it plays in achieving Universal Health Coverage. We are therefore delighted to host this reception to celebrate the launch of the IPPF’s report “Leaving no one behind” which looks more closely at progress to date and the challenges that remain towards achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, with specific examples from IPPF’s projects in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kenya and Sudan.

We are delighted to be joined by Dr Alvaro Bermejo, who took up his position as Director General of the IPPF in March last year, and I am looking forward to hearing more from him about this report and the IPPF’s activities.

The IPPF also work in close cooperation with the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (the JFPF) to promote a number of programmes in the field of population and development. The JFPF was the world’s first non-partisan organization committed to population, and was established back in April 1974 by a group of Japanese Parliamentarians led by former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi who were conscious that explosive population growth was a considerable obstacle to social and economic development in developing societies. Their belief is that problems relating to population can never be forced, and in order to tackle these challenges it is vital that elected representatives of the people actively work towards formulating and implementing population policies and programmes in their countries.

## **Looking ahead to global health at UN, G7 and TICAD 7**

Looking ahead, I am confident 2019 will be another important year in building on momentum towards achieving Universal Health Coverage. In Japan we will host the G20 Osaka Summit in June, where we will seek to realise and promote a free and open, inclusive and sustainable “human-centered future society”. We also look forward to TICAD 7 in Yokohama in August, while the first-ever UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage will also take place during the 2019 United Nations General Assembly in New York. Japan will also host the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo in 2020 to promote efforts in the field of nutrition, which constitutes a foundational element of health. Throughout this year and beyond, together with its global partners Japan wishes to lead discussions on global health and UHC, and I am sure that today’s event will be another positive step towards what we can all agree is an investment for the future, towards 2030 and beyond.

Thank you.