

(Check Against Delivery)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Yutaka Banno,
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS,
June 9, 2011

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, and distinguished delegates,

On behalf of Japanese delegation, I would like to introduce the measures against HIV/AIDS based on our experience and to remark Japan's commitment for future address.

When AIDS was reported at the first time in 1981, people learned to fear this new infectious disease as "an unknown disease" as well as "an incurable disease." The knowledge and understanding of human beings of HIV/AIDS was then so insufficient that we could not fully prevent new infection, and the patients of HIV/AIDS and their families have suffered prejudice and discrimination.

Mr. President,

I would like to reiterate the importance of "Universal access based on 'know your epidemic, know your response' methods" as described in the Secretary-General's Report when we address HIV/AIDS.

Ceaseless efforts by scientists after the first report of AIDS found the causative virus. The achievement of research and development for HIV/AIDS medicine today is remarkable. In medical terms, AIDS has now turned out to be a curable syndrome.

We are now challenged to prevent mother-to-child transmission, to manage HIV/TB co-infection, and to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. To confront them, it is important to promote public understanding of HIV/AIDS, which will make it into a "known disease" for each individual, literally.

Mr. President,

In order to promote countermeasures against HIV/AIDS, it is necessary to

(Check Against Delivery)

implement comprehensive measures to strengthen health systems as the foundations of health management, not merely specialized programs for HIV/AIDS alone. For example, it is effective to introduce counter HIV/AIDS programs into general health services such as counseling and voluntary testing for HIV during ordinary prenatal check-ups. In the meantime, it is necessary to develop testing and counseling systems for other diseases since HIV infected patients often have complications from being co-infected with other Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

In Japan, under our national health program, we have established effective health and medical systems by locating health care facilities nationwide, and developing health human resources such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. Also, Japan has realized universal medical care insurance to enable everyone to access sufficient services. These efforts contribute to achieving a less than one-percent incidence of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Japan will share these experiences with the international community and will continue to support the member countries as they address HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

Our Prime Minister Kan announced at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on MDGs, last September, as a “promise to the next generation”, that Japan will provide assistance of five billion US dollars over five years beginning in 2011 to contribute to the achievement of the health-related MDGs, particularly where progress has been slow. I also announced that the Government of Japan will make contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria amounting to 800 million US dollars in the coming years from 2011, at the Third Voluntary Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund, which was held two weeks after the High-Level Plenary Meeting.

Japan has been actively supporting the efforts of developing countries bilaterally and multi-laterally. Contrary, however, we are receiving a lot of support and very warm hearted messages to the people of affected areas from all over the world, after an unprecedented disaster, the Great East Japan Earthquake hit in March.

(Check Against Delivery)

After experiencing the great disaster, we think anew that “support” is never always a one-way flow from developed countries and to developing countries, but it is the interactive actions of the international community which assist those who live with hardship in the contemporary world by sharing our knowledge and resources. To be given support is our wish for each that comes from our desire.

On behalf of the people of Japan, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for the support of Member Countries and international organizations. I have to tell you that the people of Japan are firmly stepping forward to rehabilitate disaster affected regions with your kind support. We pursue “Open reconstruction”, collaborating with the international community in various areas, based on the philosophy of symbiosis. I hereby reaffirm that Japan will certainly achieve our commitments to the international community, I mentioned above.

Mr. President,

We realize our wish for “a world with zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths” is one that is shared among the international community. To deepen your understanding of HIV/AIDS must be the first step for realizing such a world, regardless of who you are, regardless of whether you are a professional or not, whether you are a pregnant woman or her partner, or whether you are HIV-infected or an AIDS patients or not. I hope that this United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS provides everyone of the world with a good opportunity to do so.

I would like to thank you all for your attention.

--END