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PRESS RELEASE

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JICA EXPERT AWARDED WITH THE MEDAL "FOR PEOPLE'S HEALTH"

Hanoi, March 1st, 2024 - The Ministry of Health of Vietnam organized a ceremony to award the medal "For people's health" to Dr. SHOBAYASHI Tokuaki, JICA expert – Policy Advisor to Ministry of Health of Vietnam.

The awards ceremony was attended by Minister of Health Dao Hong Lan, leaders and experts of Departments as well as representatives of many other relevant agencies. From Japanese side, Mr. Watanabe Shige, Deputy Ambassador and Mr. Sasaki Shohei, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Vietnam attended the event.

This noble award is for Vietnamese and foreign individuals who have made great contributions to Vietnam's health sector. During the working duration of 2 years (March 2022 – March 2024) at Ministry of Health, Dr. Shobayashi has been highly appreciated with policy consulting activities in areas such as universal health insurance, prevention of infectious diseases, management of circulation registration of medical equipment and drugs, training and employment of health personnel... He has also successfully organized study visits for the Ministry's personnels, particularly the working visit of Minister of Health Dao Hong Lan to Japan for studying Japanese experience on the operation of health service delivery system in 2023.

By his 2-year tenure in Vietnam, Dr. Shobayashi has visited 26 provinces and cities nationwide learning the status of the health service delivery system at provincial-district-commune levels and given many useful recommendations to the Ministry of Health for narrowing the gap in health service quality among levels.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Shobayashi was touched and expressed his gratitude to Ministry of Health. Although he faced up with some difficulties during his working duration sometimes, the colleagues at Ministry of Health have always extended a trusted friendship to him and shown a huge expectation for learning Japanese experience in many areas.

Summary of Dr. Shobayashi's working profile

- *Having 30 years of administrative experience in infectious disease control, health promotion, health insurance, hospital management, mental health, maternal and child health care at the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan.*

- *As Director General of the Health Services Administration, he led the task force on COVID-19 prevention and control policies in Japan during the two years of the outbreak.*
- *While studying in London, he received a Master's degree in public health in developing countries and wrote a thesis on why Japan became one of the world's leading countries in the health field focusing on major reforms in health policy (including insurance coverage rates) of Japan right after the Second World War while the country was still a poor country.*
- *Giving lectures on the content of the above thesis to government officials in developing countries at health seminars organized by JICA in nearly 20 years.*
- *Experiencing working at WHO headquarters in Geneva.*
- *Earning his Ph.D. in 2003 through research on disparities in albumin use among Japanese localities.*

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