

**Challenges for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Africa: What does it take to ensure equitable access and financial protection at the same time?**

**1. Background and objectives of the seminar**

Many African countries have witnessed an accelerated reduction of maternal and child mortality in the last decade. Nevertheless, majority of the countries in Sub Saharan Africa are unlikely to achieve MDGs for child and maternal mortality reduction. Increased disparity in health status and health service use within countries is emerging as an equity challenge. Aiming to guarantee for all segments of the population to have equitable access to essential healthcare and financial protection against catastrophic health expenditure, the Government of Japan and the co-organizers of TICAD V are underlining an agenda of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a unifying strategy for health development in Africa.

As it is commonly recognized that UHC calls for a comprehensive and complex set of interventions, extensive dialogue which is not limited to financial resources is needed. This seminar is organized to produce a momentum toward UHC in Africa through an interactive discussion among targeted participants that include governmental health policy makers as well as their counterparts of bilateral and international development organizations.

**2. The objectives of the seminar are:**

- To explore the opportunities and challenges of promoting UHC in African context in accordance with the evolving capacity of individual countries,
- To highlight the importance of improvement in financial capacity and management capacity of each of the governments, and;
- To seek for roles of the countries and the development partners in the promotion of UHC in Africa.

**3. Key questions to be addressed will include:**

- What does it take for African countries to ensure equitable access and financial protection at the same time?
- Where do African countries stand in the progress toward UHC?
- How can African countries increase financial capacity toward UHC? What are the roles of countries and development partners?
- How can African countries improve management capacity toward UHC? What are the roles of countries and development partners?

**4. Speakers**

- Prof. Awa Marie Coll SECK, Minister of Health and Social Action, Senegal
- Dr. Margaret CHAN, Director General, World Health Organization
- Dr. Babatunde OSOTIMEHIN, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund
- Prof. Keizo TAKEMI, Member of the House of Councilors, Government of Japan
- Dr. Tomohiko SUGISHITA, Senior Advisor(Health Systems Specialist), JICA
- Dr. Frank NYONATOR, the Ministerial Advisor on Health Systems Strengthening and former Director General of the Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Health, Ghana
- Prof. Germano MWABU, School of Economics, University of Nairobi, Kenya
- Dr. Feng ZHAO, Manager, Health Division, African Development Bank
- Hon. Yuko Obuchi, Senior Vice Minister of Finance
- Mr. Kiyoshi KODERA, Vice President, JICA

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