

Human Resource for Health towards universal health coverage



The hall of the Opening of the Third Global Forum

The Third Global Forum on Human Resources for Health (HRH) (1), which was organized by the Global Health Work Force Alliance (GHWA)ⁱ, was held in Recife, Brazil, from 10th to 13th November, 2013. The theme of this event was entitled “Human Resources for Health: Foundation for Universal Health Coverageⁱⁱ and the Post-2015 Development Agendaⁱⁱⁱ”

“The World Health Report 2006: Working Together for Health (2)”, which estimated the shortage of about 4.3 million health workers worldwide, brought about a momentum to hold the First Global Forum on HRH. A number of issues such as education, regulations, roles and rights of health workers were discussed in the First Global Forum in Kampala, Uganda, and the Second Global Forum in Bangkok, Thailand. JICA has been one of the co-hosts since the Second Global Forum.

This Third Global Forum brought together about 2,000 participants from 93 countries, from various organizations such as Ministries of Health, Finance, Labor and Education, development agencies, Civil Society Organizations, international experts, health professionals, researchers and policy makers.

The Forum consisted of six high-level round tables and 20 track sessions. The high-level round tables dealt with key HRH subthemes such as health workforce production, regulation, retention and empowerment. Four of these were followed by track sessions, in which specific aspects of these subthemes were discussed in more depth. In parallel with the track sessions, more than 70 countries stated renewed commitments to HRH. A guideline, a report and publications were launched during the forum. Moreover, there were 44 side sessions before and after the forum, in which various organizations and educational institutions shared their knowledge and experience with the audience.

From Japan, Dr Mitsuhiro Ushio, the new chair of GHWA, Assistant Minister for Global Health, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Professor Hideomi Watanabe, from Gunma University Graduate School of Health Science and others participated in the forum. From JICA, Mr. Naoyuki Kobayashi, Deputy Director-General, Human Development Department,

a health adviser from JICA Senegal office, experts and counterparts of JICA health projects were present in the forum.

Projects related to HRH in Africa and Asia

In one of the high-level round tables, “Deploy, Retention and Management: Sustaining a High Performing Workforce in the Stride Towards Universal Health Coverage”, Mr. Kobayashi emphasized the importance of health information systems as a base of planning and execution of health policy to make the most of limited budget. “JICA has worked with some African countries like South-Sudan^{iv} and Tanzania to establish a health-workforce information system (HIS)”, explained Mr. Kobayashi. Moreover, he commented that “‘5S-KAIZEN-TQM’, method of hospital management introduced in some African countries as well as Sri Lanka^v, worked not only for improvement of workplace environment but also for enhancing health workers’ motivation through moral improvement.”



Mr Kobayashi at the high- level round table (at the left side)

In track sessions, Dr Epiphane Ngumbu Mabanza, Director, Human Resources for Health(HRH), Ministry of Public Health in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dr Mabel Nangami, Senior Lecturer of Africa Health Leadership and Management Network (AHLMN), Kenya and Dr Yit Sunnara, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Health in Kingdom of Cambodia, who are counterparts of JICA health projects, were present as speakers. They shared their experiences in human resource development for health information systems, AHLMN and regulations concerning the nurse^{vi}.

Side event organized by ex-participants in JICA’s training program



Mr. Ibrahima Souka Ndella Diouf, Ministry of Health and Social Action, Dr. Noriaki Ikeda, expert of JICA and Dr. Alain Prual, the French Embassy in Benin.

One of the side events, ‘Improving the maternal newborn services by retaining skilled birth health workers in the rural and remote areas’ was organized by Réseau Vision Tokyo 2010 (RVT2010), which was established by ex-participants of JICA’s training program, “Human Resource Management in Health Sector for French Speaking West and Central African Countries”. RVT2010 is a platform to share

information and experience in order to improve management of human resources for health of this region. In the side event, they shared the policies and experiences in implementing successful retention strategies and had active discussions with the audience.

Recife Political Declaration and HRH agenda toward 2030

At the end of the forum, the Recife Political Declaration, including renewed commitments both at the country level and the international level, was formally adopted. With this Declaration, countries will commit to this agenda for health workforce development. Furthermore, civil society organization, NGOs and health professional associations issued an Open Letter which supports the Declaration and each country's commitment.

Henceforth, Prince Mahidol Award Conference will take place in Bangkok, Thailand in January, 2014, with the theme 'Transformative Learning for Equity in Health' (3), of which JICA is one of the cosponsors. Addressing the shortage of health workers is one of the key priorities of JICA's health sector operations. We will continue to assist countries in formulating policies and training HRH toward achieving the MDGs and UHC.

ⁱ The Global Health Workforce Alliance was established in 2006 as a platform for action to address the problems of human resource for health.

ⁱⁱ The goal of universal health coverage is to ensure that all people obtain the health services they need without suffering financial hardship when paying for them. (from WHO, http://www.who.int/universal_health_coverage/en/)

ⁱⁱⁱ As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will expire in 2015, there is a debate on what should be addressed after the MDGs.

^{iv} The project on Human Resource Development for Health in Southern Sudan (http://www.jica.go.jp/south_sudan/english/activities/activity06.html)

^v Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-creation Program (http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/south/project06.html)

^{vi} Project for Strengthening Human Resources Development System of Co-medicals (<http://www.jica.go.jp/project/english/cambodia/004/index.html>)

Reference

1. **GHWA**. Third Global Forum on Human Resource for Health. [Online] [Cited: 27 November 2013.] <http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/forum/2013/en/index.html>.

2. **WHO**. Health workforce. *The world health report 2006 - working together for health*. [Online] [Cited: 27 November 2013.] <http://www.who.int/hrh/whr06/en/index.html>.

3. **PMAC**. Prince Mahidol Award Conference 2014. [Online] [Cited: 27 November 2013.] <http://www.pmaconference.mahidol.ac.th>.