

73rd Session of the UN General Assembly

Third United Nations High-level Meeting on non-communicable diseases
(NCDs)

Statement by Minister Kato

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1. Introduction

- Madame President, UN Secretary-General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be here today to speak on behalf of the Japanese government.

2. Japan's experience

- In Japan, NCDs were regarded as a major issue since the 1950s. To address this issue, Japan introduced a policy in 1978 to encourage citizens to pursue healthy lives, and started to enhance health check-ups as well as health education.
- As a result, patient education on dietary salt reduction and hypertension treatment improved and the mortality rate of cerebrovascular diseases was halved from 175 in 1970 to 88 in 2017. This is one of the major successes of Japan's active NCDs policies.

3. Recent NCDs policies in Japan

- On the other hand, currently Japan is facing new challenges caused by economic development, such as high-fat diet and lack of physical activity. Changes in our life-styles have led to significant increase in new types of NCDs; for example, diabetes increased by 40-fold in 50 years.
- To address NCDs, changing individual behavior is the key to success. Taking this into consideration, Japan launched a nationwide campaign in 2000, focusing on life-styles and primary prevention.
- For example, since 2008, Japan has made insurers conduct health check-ups for those insured. These are accompanied by health education

programs to raise awareness and enhance behavioral changes.

- Furthermore, incentives are provided to insurers to enhance these check-ups and medical data accumulated through this health check-ups are analyzed to develop new policies.
- In Japan, it is said that some 70% of the people are not interested in their health. It is vital to encourage these people to become aware of their well-being.

4. Conclusion

- I would also like to touch on aging, another aspect of our current situation. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abe, we are trying to realize a society where every person, including the elderly are all dynamically engaged to tackle the demographic issues of decreasing birthrate and aging.
- In an aging society, addressing the issue of NCDs should be integrated with promoting healthy aging, which will not only benefit each individual, but also reduce medical and health care expenses. It will also increase tax and social insurance revenue by enabling those who wish to work even when they are old.
- In conclusion, our NCDs policy is still developing and further adaptation to rapid aging is required. To promote measures against NCDs, we need to share each other both successes and failures and Japan is happy to share ours.
- Thank you very much for your attention.