My name is Masaki Inaba. I have been involved in policy advocacy and recommendations as Director of the International Health Department of a Japanese NGO called the Africa-Japan Forum. I was selected as a Vice President of developed countries of UHC2030 Steering Committee, an international coordinating body related to UHC, and will be involved in universal health coverage globally.

The origin of my involvement in international health is in a place called Kotobuki-cho, the area in Yokohama known for daily laborers. In this area, there are 6,000 daily laborers, and what we witnessed was how poverty and illness are connected. Many people are affected by diseases such as chronic diseases or tuberculosis and there are also various mental illnesses such as alcoholism. What I learned in from this is how these disease problems exist as class issues.

The other is the importance of social security and social welfare. When we think about health care, we tend to focus on the topic of medical care, but there are many people who can finally access health care with the help of social security and social welfare. In this sense, for example, what supports universal health coverage of the poorest people in Japan is a system such as medical aid under the Public Assistance Act? Without this system, many people will not be able to receive health care. From this, I understood that it is necessary to think about the importance of social security and social welfare as well.

Another point I would like to emphasise is the importance of NGOs, or communities / organisations of party concerned in realising UHC in both developing and developed countries. For example, how do we appeal nomadic people, ethnic minorities, and people in various vulnerable positions to get insurance, so called public insurance? We can say that it is very difficult to realise universal health coverage without the presence of this community organisation or organisation of party concerned when guaranteeing quality of service, access to the service for example, from below.

In that sense, I think that how we provide sustainable funds for insurance coverage in the community is another very important point of UHC. In future, what we have to think about is the widening of social and economic inequality, and the other is a decrease in public funds. That will be the reality. Under such circumstances, when we think about how to achieve universal health coverage, of course, political commitment is important, but also the existence of strong civil society very important in realising this. I believe it is very important that civil society closely monitors the universal health coverage system and makes various efforts that allow many people to receive UHC properly.

I hope that young people who will support society in future will work together to create a strong civil society. Thank you very much for listening.