

**Statement by H.E. Ms Amina Nurhussien
Minister of Health of the State of Eritrea during
Tokushukai Annual International Conference
Tokyo: March 27th 2010**

**Honorable Chairman Tarao TOKUDA
Chairman of Tokushukai Medical Corporation;**

Ministers, Excellencies and Honorable participants;

Ladies and gentlemen;

First of all let me join the other speakers before me to express, on behalf of my delegation and myself, our deep appreciation and gratitude for the invitation extended to Eritrea to participate in this important *Tokushukai Annual International Conference* and for the warm hospitality that was extended to us during our stay here in Tokyo by Chairman Tarao TOKUDA and other dignitaries and friends of Tokushukai Medical Corporation.

Secondly, our delegation would like to take this opportunity to share with Tokushukai and honorable participants of this important conference, very briefly, current health situation and challenges facing us in Eritrea.

The constitution of Eritrea and other pertinent laws provide that the State is under obligation to endeavor, within limits of its resources, to make health services available to all citizens.

Eritrea's long-term vision is the development of a health care system in which all citizens have easy access to quality health services at affordable cost.

A healthy population is necessary for establishing a dynamic, productive economy and a resilient society in our country. To address this challenge the Government has adopted a National Health Sector Policy (HSP) and Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP), which focus on the provision of primary, secondary and tertiary level health services throughout the country.

National wide there are a total of 340 health facilities of which 26 are hospitals, 52 health centers, 180 health stations, 77 clinics and 5 facilities specialized in maternal and child health care service in the country. The 26 hospitals include five referral hospitals, 225 doctors, more than 2,000 nurses and 2,000 associate nurses. The balance of the professional staff serving in the sector consists of pharmacists and pharmacy, lab, dental and radiology technicians.

On the basis of a number of well-established performance indicators in the healthcare sector, Eritrea has, during the last seventeen years of independence, made significant

improvements in the health status of its citizens. They include Life Expectancy (LE), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Under-five Mortality Rate (UFMR), Malaria Morbidity and Mortality Rate (MMMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR).

During 1995-2002, LE increased from 45 to 60 years. The IMR decreased from 72 to 48 deaths per 1,000 live births and the UFMR dropped from 136 to 93 deaths per 1,000 live births. Polio, measles and tetanus were successfully eradicated from the country.

Particularly notable has been the success in controlling communicable diseases. The MMMR has dropped by over 80 percent since 1999, making Eritrea one of the few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to meet the Abuja Roll Back Malaria targets. HIV prevalence has been kept under control at below 1% and Eritrea is projected to be on track to achieve the health MD targets by 2015.

To address the shortage of healthcare manpower, our Ministry, shall train more health care professional in the Orto Medical School, College of Health Sciences and College of Nursing. During the next five years, it will produce 280 general practitioners, 45 specialists and 15,000 nurses. It will also improve the availability of trained staff in medical imaging as well as laboratory services delivery in all hospitals.

Therefore let me take this opportunity to call upon Tokushukai and other health care institutions participating in this meeting to enhance and develop their collaborative linkages with the local efforts and challenges to improve the health services in my country because, I am confident that you all agree with me, health threat to any one country is a security threat to all mankind. Diseases or their causes have no boundaries or flags nor strings attached to them. With this in view, let me assure you that Eritrea is ready to learn from your successes and emulate good examples.

Last but not least let me also take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the continued collaboration extended by the Government of Japan as well as Tokushukai Medical Corporation. to improve health care service of my country

Arigato Gozaimashta!

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Thank you!