WHO, DELEGATE OF JAPAN, POSITION PAPER

COMMITTEE: WHO

AGENDA ITEM: ADOLESCENT HEALTH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

COUNTRY: JAPAN

Located in the northwest Pacific Ocean, Japan is an island nation in East Asia. The country is surrounded by the Sea of Japan to the west, extending from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea, Philippine Sea, and Taiwan in the south. The archipelago comprises 14,125 islands, covering a total area of 377,975 square kilometers, and is situated within the Ring of Fire. Despite being the eleventh most populous country in the world, Japan is densely populated and urbanized, with around 125 million inhabitants concentrated on narrow coastal plains due to the mountainous terrain that makes up about 75% of the country. Japan is divided into eight traditional regions and 47 administrative prefectures. The Greater Tokyo Area is the most populous metropolitan area globally, with more than 37.2 million residents.

Although varying widely depending on the specific country and region, it is a bitter fact that most adolescents who reside in developing countries face severe health issues. These issues range from infectious diseases to non-communicable diseases; such as malnutrition, mental health issues, substance abuse and sexual health problems. In the modern world, adolescents and their issues are one of the most overlooked matters among many others. These issues, although generally disregarded in the list of priorities, are critical and need to be addressed with careful consideration. Even though they have not exclusively stated their policy or opinion on the current matter publicly, Japan has been involved in several initiatives and programs aimed to improve the health of adolescents in developing countries over the years. Along with supporting initiatives made by the UN, Japan has also started their own program. For instance, the Asia Africa Health Initiative emphasizes their policy and involvement as it was launched by the Japanese government in 2013 to support the health and medical sectors of developing countries in Asia and Africa. Through this initiative, Japan has been providing technical support, medical equipment, and training programs to improve the health of adolescents in developing countries. Another example is the Japan Trust Fund for Scaling Up Nutrition, which was established by the Japanese government in 2011 to address malnutrition– including among adolescents, in developing countries. Through this fund, Japan has provided financial support to initiatives aimed at improving nutrition and health in these countries.

As many initiatives have already been put into motion whether it be by organizations such as UNICEF, the UN, or by the countries themselves, the next biggest step to take would be to provide proper funding for these organizations and these initiatives, advocating for the prioritization of them. Alongside providing the assistance to these countries to ease the burden caused by the health issues that they face, be it providing the needed education and professionals, investing in healthcare infrastructure, providing the tools, equipment and pharmaceuticals necessary, or investing in the research and development of a reliable source of nutrition in these countries, we believe that alongside supporting them, the key to proper progress in improving the overall health of these countries– including the health of adolescents among them, is ensuring sustainability. For example, in order to ensure said sustainability, this can be done through engaging in dialogue with local communities, adolescent groups, and other stakeholders– which can help ensure that aid programs are responsive to the needs and priorities of the target population. Partnering with local organizations and governments can help ensure that aid is targeted to the most pressing needs of the community as well as being implemented in a culturally sensitive and sustainable way. Establishing clear goals and benchmarks for aid programs and regularly monitoring progress towards these goals can help to ensure that aid is effectively applied and an outcome is achieved. What is needed is a long term solution that assures the members of UN eventually reach the point of being able to sustain these developing countries in healthcare and sanitisation. Without needing continuous assistance from other countries, they should be able to provide for themselves with the help of the initiatives that are being placed forward.