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Mr Hisashi Ietsugu
Chairman of the Kobe Chamber of Commerce
and Industry
Member of the WKC Joint Cooperating Committee
6-1 Minatojima-Nakamachi, Chuo-ku
Kobe 650-8543
Japan

15 February 2021

Dear Mr Ietsugu,

In honour of the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) Centre for Health Development (WHO Kobe Centre - WKC), I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the sustained support that you, the Kobe Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hyogo Prefecture, Kobe City and Kobe Steel, Ltd. (the Kobe Group), along with the members of the WKC Joint Cooperating Committee, have provided to the Centre for the past 25 years.

In 1990, the Governor of Hyogo Prefecture and the Mayor of Kobe City first proposed to WHO the idea of creating a research centre in Kobe, Japan, as a contribution to international health. This vision became reality when WHO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kobe Group on 22 August 1995 to highlight the ways that health improvements contribute to increased productivity. This vision is the foundation of WKC's research today on Universal Health Coverage to generate evidence for strengthening health systems that are resilient to the needs of the whole population.

Since its inception, WKC has had both a global and a local mandate. Globally, as an outpost office of the WHO Headquarters, WKC conducts research addressing the health systems response to the challenges of population ageing, and health emergency and disaster risk preparedness. Established in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Centre also contributes to the local community, through partnerships with universities in the Kansai area, dissemination of research results in local WKC fora, participation in local technical committees and, more recently, through efforts to widely disseminate information to professionals and the public about COVID-19.

The 25th Anniversary of WKC allows us to reflect on the important contributions made to the Centre's success. The work of the Centre would not have been possible without the sustained support of the Hyogo and Kobe communities, and your continued guidance over the years has been highly valued. We look forward to working continuously with you and partners across the Kansai region of Japan to fulfil both the global health mandate and the needs of the local community.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your continued support for the work of the WHO Centre for Health Development.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General

cc: Mr Yasutoshi Hiraoka, General Manager of Industry Division