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2015 will surely be remembered for magnificent accomplishments in science and medicine. But there have also been unprecedented developments in an area that affects all our lives intimately and directly: global health. Here it is often the catastrophes that linger in public memory: the aftermath of the Ebola epidemic, and reports placing the number of refugees and displaced people at an all-time high. We fight against microbes that have evolved resistance to drugs, permitting them to reclaim entire regions and spread to new ones. We witness the rising toll of climate change, which now affects the health of billions of people. As organizers of the World Health Summit, we hear all these calls to action.

The M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centers, Universities, and National Academies is now six years old. In 2009 we gathered at the first World Health Summit, which has become a unique forum for promoting global health through networking and dialogue among medical practitioners, academia, govern-

ment, and the private sector. Over the past six years the M8 Alliance has developed a respected and authoritative voice in decision-making on global health issues. Moreover, among the world's leading academic health centers we have built new bonds of friendship, trust, and collaboration.

On that solid foundation, 2015 has been a unique and pivotal year. This year's WHS Regional Meeting was held six months ago in Japan. From that meeting the M8 Alliance issued a statement in which we strongly emphasized the need for resilient health systems. What does that mean? Some of the attendees were able to see what it means, firsthand. Fukushima Medical University co-sponsored the meeting and kindly invited us to visit. There we saw how the people of Fukushima were still responding to the triple disaster of 2011. We saw how global health issues were manifest at the local level, and how they were being dealt with locally. We saw a population that is aging very rapidly. We saw how even

an economically advanced country can be deeply challenged by an unforeseen crisis. And we saw how the enthusiasm of the next generation of healthcare leaders obliges us to give them the best guidance and opportunities that we can. Coming out of this year's Regional Meeting, the M8 Alliance's statement focuses us on resilience and on action. Action, that is, to overcome the challenges of rapid aging, responding to and preparing for crises, and fostering new leaders. While each M8 Alliance member will confront these challenges to resilience in its own way, we will learn from each other, and we will share our experiences with the world.

After six years of building a strong base, 2015 may be remembered as the year when we mobilized our base into action. The M8 Alliance will now encourage and support specific actions by its members as they build resilient health systems locally and as they set examples from which the global healthcare community can benefit.

The world is right to expect much from the M8 Alliance. Entering our new action-oriented phase, let us continue working together as we fulfill our founding mission to improve global health. This year's World Health Summit program reflects that spirit.

Thank you all for your support, and welcome to the World Health Summit 2015!



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