

Global Health R&D: Transformative Action & Partnership

Report on GHIT Fund Side Event at TICAD IV

Nairobi, Kenya

August 26, 2016

GHIT Fund

Global Health Innovative Technology Fund



“Japan is a powerhouse in product development and a leader in global health. When you look at the Hashimoto Initiative, or the idea of the Global Fund, or most recently universal health coverage, Japan is leading the way in global health. Importantly, Japan’s greatest global health transformations occur in partnership with Africa,” said Dr. BT Slingsby, CEO and Executive Director of the GHIT Fund, at the start of an August 26 meeting convened on the sidelines of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Summit, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya.

TICAD is a major global economic policy forum initiated by Japan in the early 1990s with the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank. TICAD now plays a critical role in facilitating the implementation of African development

initiatives under the dual principle of African ownership and international partnership. In honor of the tremendous role of health in African development and the Japan-Africa partnership, Japan also presents its prestigious Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize at TICAD, which honors individuals with outstanding achievements in the fields of medical research and medical services to combat infectious and other diseases in Africa that contribute to the health and welfare of all humankind.

The GHIT Fund, Japan’s flagship global health R&D initiative, aligns with TICAD and the Noguchi prize to highlight the importance of global health R&D to broader Japan-Africa collaboration, and to further integrate global health R&D into Japan’s internationally renowned global health activities.

Discussions at the GHIT meeting focused on the different aspects of successful R&D

work in global health, in particular the participation of African experts and country capacity to deliver life-saving products to those who need them. Distinguished speakers included two ministers of health, the founder of the world’s first product development partnership, a scientist whose pioneering studies of malaria have shaped contemporary prevention and treatment strategies, and a driving force in the movement to ensure access to life-saving HIV drugs and services, two Hideyo Noguchi Prize recipients.



Minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki

Engaging African Expertise & Capacity

Echoing the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Symposium's focus on human resource development, an important theme of the GHIT meeting was the need to engage African medical researchers and service providers in R&D processes. Keynote speaker Yasuhisa Shiozaki, of Health, Labour and Welfare for the Government of Japan, that "Africa knows best what Africa needs most," and noted that the participation of low and middle-income countries is essential for successful development of new medicines. "I am glad to see that African researchers have already been engaged in some projects funded by GHIT," he added. "The projects conducted in Africa are significant not only as a process of new medical product development, but also as a path to building capacity to develop a new medicine by African researchers here in Africa. [...] Japan is more than willing to work diligently with all of them to make Africa's future much brighter."

Honorable Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Minister of Health and Social Welfare for the Republic of Senegal, discussion Co-Chair, also lauded African participation in GHIT-funded research. Such collaboration leverages and directly engages the unique expertise of African researchers and research institutions, as well as individuals, institutions, and technology from Japan. GHIT for its facilitation and support of the clinical trials under way in Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Uganda and Tanzania for cutting-edge malaria and TB vaccines, as well as game-changing

schistosomiasis and malaria treatments. "This collaboration between institutions from Japan and institutions from Africa—this partnership—is essential. The GHIT Fund matters to Africa because it will help African researchers have support to be able to conduct research on what is important for them."



Minister Awa Marie Coll-Seck

An excellent example of such research and African capacity crucial to global health R&D comes from Kenya itself. Dr. Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, recalled experiences earlier in his career dedicated to the development of an AIDS vaccine: "A set of Kenyan scientists built the capacity in Kenya to do HIV vaccine trials... by the time they had done three, four, five, six trials, they got really good at it, and that meant they had the capacity not just for HIV, but for other needs."



Dr. Seth Berkley

The Importance of Access

Scientific expertise and R&D capacity are crucial, but their impact is insignificant if

the development process does not also ensure affordable access and appropriate delivery of needed tools. In the words of Dr. Slingsby, no matter how good a product is, "means nothing unless it reaches the patient." Products must make their way out of the laboratory into the hands of health care providers and patients to be useful.

Access to life-saving products is an area where partnerships are particularly indispensable. "You need partnerships because most often the people who develop the new technologies don't have the skills for some of the other things you need," explained Sir Brian Greenwood, Professor of Clinical Tropical Medicine at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a recipient of the first Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize in 2008. "in partnership should be Japan's priority in global health research going forward," he added.



Sir Brian Greenwood

Indeed, bringing a new health care product to market requires a set of tools and resources that are quite separate from the expertise that spurs scientific discovery. It involves appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks, the capacity to conduct technological assessments, pharmacovigilance, safety monitoring, and a range of other components. Dr. Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director of the HIV, Health and

Development Group within UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Program Support, commended the Government of Japan as being "particularly visionary" for investing both in the R&D of new tools and in preparing the ground for product market introduction.

Addressing the GHIT-UNDP partnership she said, "[It is] very much about getting the right products--the right diagnostics, vaccines, or treatments--to the right people in a timely manner and at the right cost, and doing all the work in countries to be able to prepare the ground." She highlighted the example of UNDP working with partners in Tanzania to do just that – to improve the policy and regulatory environment and the ability to introduce new products, so when GHIT-funded tools are ready for the market, their introduction can be much faster.

Ultimately, R&D and access planning represent continuous and mutually reinforcing processes. A product needs to be conceived with access in mind, but it is only once the initial product is in the hands of patients and their caregivers that the R&D process can continue to refine the product and further improve access.



Dr. Mandeep Dhaliwal

Recalling his experiences in the fight for equitable access to HIV drugs, Dr. Alex

Coutinho, Executive Director of Inshuti Mu Buzima, Chairman of the Board of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, and a recipient of the 2013 Hideyo Noguchi Prize, proposed that "at the beginning you want a product regardless of its characteristics, but once you get that product, you need to continue improving it with access in mind – what does it take to get to a million people?"



Dr. Alex Coutinho

Dr. Dhaliwal also underscored the importance of planning for market delivery during the R&D process: "You simply can't wait till the product is in phase 3 or phase 4 to start doing the work in countries to make sure it ultimately gets to the people who need it most."

The Driving Force of Global Health R&D

In addition to R&D partnerships and access considerations, the discussion highlighted the tremendous positive impact that global health products have on people's lives – the ultimate reason for continued and increased investment in global health R&D.

"The solutions born from global health R&D are not abstract concepts," Minister Coll-Seck reminded the participants, "they are tangible, concrete, live-saving tools—tools that have helped me

personally to save lives and improve health programs in Senegal."

Speakers pointed to several shining examples of transformational R&D results, including patient-administered HIV testing that allows individuals to learn their HIV status in private, as well as rapid malaria and tuberculosis diagnostics that empower health workers to make faster, more accurate, and more cost-effective treatment decisions.

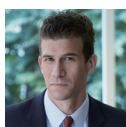
In his closing remarks, Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa, Chairman of the GHIT Fund and Adjunct Professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, summarized the meeting's themes by that "partnership is the new way Japan approaches Africa to help create better health and health care systems." Partnership with non-Japanese entities is in fact a fundamental requirement for GHIT investment awards, based on the belief that when scientists, researchers, physicians, and government officials from different countries bring their expertise together, the processes of discovery and delivery are greatly enhanced, leading to improved patient outcomes.

And that is ultimately our common goal.



Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa

Opening Remarks



BT Slingsby, MD, PhD, MPH

Chief Executive Officer,
Global Health Innovative Technology Fund

Keynote Speech

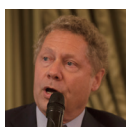


Yasuhisa Shiozaki

Minister of Health,
Labour and Welfare for the Government of Japan

Panel Session

Panelists



Seth Berkley, MD

Chief Executive Officer,
Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance



Awa Marie Coll-Seck, MD, PhD

Minister of Health and Social Welfare
for the Republic of Senegal



Alex Coutinho, MD, MPH

Executive Director of Inshuti Mu Buzima
Chairman of the Board of the
International AIDS Vaccine Initiative



Mandeep Dhaliwal, MD, LLB

Director of the HIV,
Health and Development Group
within UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Program Support



Brian Greenwood, CBE, FRCP, FRS

Manson Professor of Clinical Tropical Medicine,
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Closing Remarks



Kiyoshi Kurokawa, MD

Chair of the Board, Global Health Innovative Technology Fund
Adjunct Professor, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
Chairman, Health and Global Policy Institute