

April 8, 2013

MHLW joins Japan's first Public-Private Partnership to facilitate the R&D of new health technologies for the developing world

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan supports the research and development (R&D) of new health technologies for the developing world, through financing United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and collaborating Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT), a non-profit organization based in Japan, that announced its establishment on April 8 (Appendix 1).

Currently, R&D efforts are insufficient for medicines of diseases that are disproportionately affecting developing countries, including Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)¹, tuberculosis and malaria, due to small market incentives and a low demand for these medicines in developed countries. The international community is urged to provide people with access to affordable essential medicines, in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies.²

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributed 700 million yen respectively, by the supplementary budget for 2012 (fiscal year), to the United Nations Development Programme to promote R&D of the medical products for developing countries, as well as to support their delivery through public-private partnership. GHIT and UNDP will collaborate together to contribute to this important global health issue, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan expects that Japanese pharmaceutical industry extend global activity in this area (Appendix 2).

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*The foregoing is a provisional translation. The date indicated above denotes the date of issue of the original press release in Japanese.

¹ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NTDs blight the lives of more than 1 billion of the world's poorest 2.7 billion people. There are 149 countries and territories where NTDs are endemic, at least 100 of which are endemic for 2 or more of these diseases, and 30 countries that are endemic for 6 or more. These diseases not only survive and spread in conditions of poverty; they also anchor large populations in poverty.

² The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were officially established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/mdg/>
The Target 8E prescribes "In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries".

Press Release

April 8, 2013

Global Health Innovative Technology Fund

Announcement of the Establishment of The Global Health Innovative Technology Fund

Japan's first public-private partnership
to advance the development of new health technologies for the developing world

The Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund), the first public-private partnership of its kind in Japan, today announced its official launch. The GHIT Fund has been established to advance the research and development of new medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics to fight infectious diseases in the developing world.

The GHIT Fund aims to reinforce Japan's contribution to global health by developing new health technologies, utilizing the highly developed science and technology capacity found at the country's pharmaceutical companies, universities and research institutions. In providing grants for promising research, the Fund will help bridge the gap between basic research and clinical studies, allowing for unprecedented medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics.

It is estimated that over 1 billion of the world's poorest of the poor suffer from HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)¹. To eliminate these diseases, highly effective/low-cost medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics are much needed. The GHIT Fund will facilitate and fund global R&D partnerships that aim to discover and develop new medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics that can help realize the elimination of these diseases in the developing world.

The GHIT Fund was established as a public-private partnership between the Government of Japan, a consortium of Japanese pharmaceutical companies (in alphabetical order: Astellas Pharma Inc.; Daiichi Sankyo Company Ltd.; Eisai Co., Ltd.; Shionogi & Co., Ltd.; and Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Ltd.) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation². The GHIT Fund will proactively seek out further investment partners to advance new health technologies for the developing world, and the betterment of healthcare globally.

To learn more about GHIT Fund, please see www.ghitfund.org.

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