



Global Health Diet Roundtable

“Achieving the SDGs on Maternal and Child Health—The Global Financing Facility and Japan”

AUGUST 28, 2019

TOKYO, JAPAN

JCIE HELD ITS fourth Global Health Diet Roundtable on the sidelines of the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7), convening six Diet members for a conversation with Dr. Muhammad Pate, who recently became the director of the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) and previously served as Nigeria’s health minister. Pate described the GFF’s unique role as a financing facility that catalyzes funding and coordinates partner programs around comprehensive, country-led strategies to

improve reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH-N) in the world’s highest burden countries. He was joined by Mr. Ikuo Takizawa of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), who gave an overview of Japan’s engagement with the GFF at both organizational and field levels. The meeting was organized as part of a roundtable series that is designed to engage up-and-coming legislators in global health discussions, giving them a chance to discuss key issues with domestic and international leaders in the field.



Diet members listen to the explanation of the GFF’s founding



Dr. Muhammad Pate describes how the GFF operates

GUEST SPEAKER

Muhammad A. Pate

Director, Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF); Global Director, Health, Nutrition and Population, World Bank Group; former Minister of State for Health, Nigeria

Ikuo Takizawa

Deputy Director General, Human Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency

PARTICIPANTS

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Pate emphasized three main points as key to the success of the GFF model so far. The first is the GFF’s coordinating role, which utilizes country platforms to align partner programs around a single country-led and multisectoral RMNCAH-N agenda. Second, the facility also helps to improve efficiency in health spending by supporting local capacities in conducting fiscal space analyses and prioritizing high-impact interventions. Third, the GFF catalyzes additional funding in the form of World Bank loans as well as through domestic and private sector resource mobilization to build a path toward sustainable financing in recipient countries. Recounting a recent visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Dr. Pate described the improvements in frontline access to healthcare services already being seen, as reflected in an increase in health spending from 7 percent to 8.5 percent of total government spending within two years.

Partnerships are central to the GFF model. Pate cited partnerships with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on delivering basic vaccines to remote and underserved regions as well as with JICA on training essential frontline health workers as examples of successful coordination that strengthens local systems based on country needs. JICA has partnered with the GFF since its establishment in 2015, and Takizawa emphasized the GFF’s importance to achieving human security by eradicating preventable maternal and child deaths, its contributions to universal health coverage (UHC), and its focus on equity as strategic rationales for Japanese collaboration.



Sen. Hanako Jimi comments on GFF’s work to improve nutrition

PAST GLOBAL HEALTH DIET ROUNDTABLES

Evolution of America’s Bipartisan Support for Global Health (September 6, 2018)

GUEST SPEAKER: Amb. Mark Dybul, Co-Director, Center for Global Health and Quality, Georgetown University Medical Center

The Looming Problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (December 21, 2018)

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Kazuhiro Tateda, Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Toho University; President, Japanese Association for Infectious Diseases; President, Japanese Society for Clinical Microbiology

Neglected Tropical Diseases—What Japan Needs to Know (June 11, 2019)

GUEST SPEAKERS: Dr. Kenji Hirayama, Professor, Institute of Tropical Medicine, Nagasaki University; Secretary-General, Japan Alliance of Global NTDs; & **Dr. Catherine Ohura**, CEO & Executive Director, Global Health Innovative Technology Fund

The Diet members each weighed in with questions about how the GFF operates and contributes to achieving global health goals related to the RMNCAH-N agenda. Members asked technical questions about the GFF country selection criteria, how it implements and monitors its efforts through the country platform, and whether there are strategic areas where Japanese expertise can be leveraged to help achieve shared goals. A theme that came up throughout was how the GFF helps advance the UHC agenda by improving frontline access to basic health services, and how it does so with a focus on equity that prioritizes vulnerable populations. The interlinkages between child health and issues of poverty reduction, education, food systems, and future employment brought up by many spoke to a shared understanding of the complex and multisectoral nature of the RMNCAH-N agenda, and its importance as a cornerstone in achieving UHC and the SDGs.