

## **US-Japan Dialogue Strengthening Partnership on Global Health**

March 7, 2017 | Washington DC

More than 30 policy experts and senior officials from nine US and Japanese government agencies gathered for a high-level policy dialogue to identify areas where cooperation on global health can be strengthened under the Trump administration and the Abe government. Participants noted a clear desire around the world for strong US and Japanese leadership. They also felt that the close relationship between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe provides a foundation for creating a bilateral partnership on global health that would demonstrate their leadership.

While there has always been considerable overlap in Japanese and US priorities on global health, there have also been some relative differences—for instance, Japan has been deeply committed to advancing universal health coverage (UHC) while the United States has led on gender issues and protecting minority populations. In the animated discussion at the US-Japan Dialogue, participants identified five areas where US and Japanese interests are now closely aligned and which are ripe for stronger cooperation in global health:

### **1) Work together to expand global health security**

The Ebola epidemic showed just how vulnerable the world is to the threat of infectious disease, and it is only a matter of time before the United States and Japan will be forced to cope with a new pandemic. Through bilateral coordination in the broader global framework, the United States and Japan can help ensure that the pandemic financing facilities and other measures associated with the Ise-Shima G7 Summit are implemented effectively. Similarly, the United States and Japan have an important role to play in strengthening developing countries' capacity to meet international health standards and in carrying on the crucial work of the Global Health Security Agenda.

### **2) Collaborate in strengthening health systems in vulnerable countries to better respond to emergencies**

Countries with strong health systems are more likely to prevent pandemics from spiraling out of control, and there is a great deal that Japan and the United States can do to help developing countries on this front. This includes ensuring that funding through mechanisms such as PEPFAR and Japan's UHC initiatives is coordinated so that it is utilized effectively and helps build up sustainable health systems and workforces. The two countries can also coordinate their training and investment strategies for health system strengthening in vulnerable countries, including technical assistance for disease surveillance and other initiatives.

### **3) Cooperate to advance efforts to battle communicable diseases**

The United States and Japan have been at the forefront of progress to battle communicable diseases globally through initiatives such as PEPFAR and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The United States and Japan should continue their global leadership in this arena, sustaining and expanding support for these initiatives and other responses to communicable diseases while working to make them more innovative.

#### **4) Collaborate on efforts to promote R&D and innovation in global health responses**

Japan and the United States are well suited to drive innovation in global health by (1) working jointly on R&D for new pharmaceuticals and medical technologies, including antimicrobials; (2) promoting new models, including public-private partnerships, that better leverage the private sector and civil society, such as Japan's innovative response of the Global Health Innovation Technology Fund (GHIT); and (3) creating an international environment more conducive to innovation by advancing intellectual property rights protections, harmonizing regulatory processes, and championing new financing mechanisms.

#### **5) Apply lessons from Japan and the United States to address aging populations**

Many of the world's developing countries are coming to realize that they are likely to grow old before they get rich, and there is much that Japan and the United States can do together to provide technical assistance and disseminate innovative technology and approaches to lighten the burden that aging will place on their health systems.

The United States and Japan can work together in various institutional arenas to advance their global health goals. We have much to gain by coordinating our positions more intensively in forums such as the G7, the G20, and APEC. The United States and Japan can also reinforce one another with strong leadership and funding via international organizations that focus specifically on health and development, such as the Global Fund and Gavi, as well as the WHO and the World Bank. Furthermore, other initiatives can be advanced through bilateral cooperation between US and Japanese agencies, including among the State Department and USAID on one side and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA on the other; through research institutes such as the NIH, the CDC, and Japan's AMED; and via enhanced dialogues including the two countries' health ministries.

Japan and the United States can work together to demonstrate stronger leadership on global health by seizing opportunities to advance both countries' shared priorities. The two governments might consider launching the first major bilateral initiative specifically on global health cooperation to link together a range of collaborative efforts by different agencies, engage the private sector and civil society in both countries, and demonstrate US and Japanese leadership in advancing health security for our own citizens and for the world.