

Opening Address by Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda at the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Presentation Ceremony

Your Majesty the Emperor, Your Majesty the Empress, Distinguished Heads of State and Government participating TICAD, Honored Laureates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for gracing the Presentation Ceremony of the inaugural Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize with your presence.

I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Brian Greenwood, and Professor Miriam Were. I would also like to share the felicitation with the families of the two laureates and the representatives of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and of the Uzima Foundation.

The idea of Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize was first conceived during the visit of former Prime Minister Koizumi to Africa. With the full endorsement of Professor Konare, then Chair of the AU Commission, and President Kufour of Ghana, the establishment of the Prize was first announced in the joint press conference of Japan-AU Summit meeting in July 2006. After two years of preparation since then, we have the pleasure of witnessing today the first presentation ceremony. Eighty years and a week ago today, was the day that Dr. Noguchi died of yellow fever in Ghana.

Japan considers improvement of health in Africa as one of the priority agenda in global health and the Prize aims to generate quality medical research and health services centering on Africa. TICAD and G8 Toyako Summit have made global health an important agenda in response to surging international interest in global health further sharpened by its link with the environment and ecology. In this context, the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize was a confluence of Japanese policy and the building momentum of the international community.

The achievements of Dr. Greenwood and Professor Were are of particular significance. They have opened a new horizon in tropical medicine and health services and have lived up to our belief in medical progress in Africa and improvement of health of the African people.

The Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize recognizes not only milestone innovations and heroic valor at the personal level, but also values their impact on resolving or improving the adverse effects of disease at the

societal level. Dr. Greenwood and Professor Were have spent their professional career in Africa for thirty years and forty years respectively. Their activities have brought to our attention the agony, pain and indignity transpiring on the ground, and enlightened us on how medical research and medical services are intimately linked to human society.

For these reasons, I am convinced that Dr. Greenwood and Professor Were are worthy of the inaugural laureates representing the ideals of the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize.

Tropical medicine and health activities in Africa have not attracted enough attention of the international community. I sincerely hope that this award will stimulate international awareness and action which will help redirect the necessary human and financial resources to these areas. I also hope that this will encourage a new window of exchange and cooperation between the health communities of Africa and the wider world.

Dr. Greenwood, Professor Were, I wish to pay tribute to your great achievements. Congratulations once again.