



United Nations University

“Solving the pressing global problems of today and tomorrow”

***Welcome and Introductory Remarks for the Commemorative Lectures of
the First Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Laureates***

*Prof. Dr. Konrad Osterwalder
Rector of United Nations University
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
(Read on his behalf by Ambassador Hiroharu Koike,
Special Adviser to the Rector)*

Distinguished Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Laureates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you here today. In particular, I would like to express a warm welcome to Dr. Brian Greenwood and Prof. Miriam K. Were - the first Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Laureates. It is a special pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of Prof. Dr. Konrad Osterwalder, UNU Rector, who is today involved in the discussions of Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama.

It is very fitting that the Commemorative Lectures of the First Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize winners should take place at the UN University and during this important time when the world is focused on measures to bring renewed energy and support to strengthening the progress of Africa's development. As many of you know, the UN University takes a strong interest in participating in the TICAD process as a further extension of its work in and on Africa. Much of the University's work is directed towards critical problems facing Africa - ranging from food security and natural resource management to food and nutrition, water and desertification, and human health related to HIV/AIDS. One of the UNU's 13 research institutes is located in Africa - on the campus of the University of Ghana. The UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) which focuses on key elements of sustainable natural resource management is, in fact, is situated very near the Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research (NMIMR) in Legon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the crucial challenges in Africa remains the vast human suffering brought about by infectious and other diseases. The UN Millennium Development Goals (in particular goal six) sets a target to halt and to begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. It also sets the benchmark of halting and beginning to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases, in particular, tuberculosis, by that same date. At present, only eight African countries are likely to be able to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS; and 12 to 13 countries in Africa are seen to be able to achieve the target in respect of malaria and tuberculosis. Clearly, much more needs to be done – not just to achieve the target, but to further address the continuing human suffering in Africa.

Dr. Hideyo Noguchi's work and life gives us inspiration for our future efforts. He was truly international in his perspective at a time when few in the world could even fathom the need for research and investigation into problems that were affecting South America and Africa. His work was highly focused on finding solutions and on reducing human suffering from such diseases as Oroya fever, polio and syphilis, and of course, yellow fever which ultimately brought short his life some 82 years ago in Ghana. Such efforts will be critical if we are to address the continuing threats to human health in all parts of the world.

I would like to join in with the many who have congratulated Dr. Greenwood and Professor Were for their designation as the first Noguchi Africa Laureates and to express our hope for the continuing success of their work.

In closing, I would like to express our gratitude to the Cabinet Office of Japan for taking the lead in the organization of these commemorative lectures, and also to our partner, the Science Council of Japan. We are very honoured to have Professor Were and Dr. Greenwood here at the United Nations University for their important lectures today.

Thank you very much.

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