

As delivered

**Speech at a Reception to celebrate the Opening of
the AMED London Office
at the Embassy of Japan
by Ambassador Koji Tsuruoka
on Wednesday 1 February 2017**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening everyone, and thank you all very much for joining us to celebrate what I believe to be a marvellous achievement and also a result of very hard work from both sides, between Japan and the UK. This wouldn't have been possible if there had been no joint commitment to work together, to contribute further not just for the sake of our two countries but for the whole of humanity. Indeed, what the AMED London Office will be initiating is going to be a major contribution for the whole of mankind.

Human life sciences lie at the heart of the office's mission. I'd like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to all the experts who have consistently shown their deep commitment and devotion to this field, and the opening of this very important, historic office here in London will surely inspire them even further. Well, these are some very humble, uninformed and amateurish comments from an ambassador. Of course, you cannot expect an ambassador to be an expert on life sciences or on anything to do with science because when we envoys are stationed here by our home government, in most cases our remit is to listen to what people in London and the UK have to say.

But it is indeed a great pleasure for me to be able to host this event today at the Embassy. You have joined us to celebrate the opening of AMED's London Office, and I am very grateful to have been joined by so many leading figures from the UK and other countries, and I believe that this is testament to the ambition that Japan and the UK, and other countries as well, have for

collaboration in medical research. Today I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the great potential of life sciences and medical research as areas of endeavour that lend themselves to collaboration between Japan and the UK.

The UK continues to break new ground as a world leader in modern life sciences and medical research, as is well illustrated by the work of Robert Hooke and Edward Jenner. A large number of eminent people from Japan have also studied here in the UK and, with Japanese scientists having recently won consecutive Nobel prizes in Physiology and Medicine, Japan is now also enjoying its own success as a partner of the UK.

Proof of the achievements of Japan-UK research collaboration can be seen in an analytical report published by JSPS London, which shows that Japan-UK joint publications have maintained a very high citation ranking compared to other international joint publications.

Promoting healthy lives for all is a goal that we all share, and Universal Health Coverage is a key part of achieving this. Meanwhile both Japan and the UK have stressed the importance of life sciences and their role as a key driver for economic growth. I am confident that, as both the UK and Japan face daunting budgetary restrictions, our collaboration in this area can help us to overcome these challenges. AMR is one of the biggest tests for global health, and Japan and the UK are collaborating to tackle this difficult issue from the perspective of a One Health approach. In addition, last month we, together with the Wellcome Trust, announced our decision to join CEPI, a new global R&D organisation for epidemic preparedness and response. The establishment of the AMED London Office will clearly give us even more opportunities to collaborate like this.

Meanwhile, in November the 10th Japan-UK science and technology cooperation Joint Committee convened in London, where we discussed future opportunities for cooperation, including closer collaboration between our funding agencies. I am delighted to hear that, following today's opening remarks,

there will be an announcement regarding new collaboration between AMED and the MRC, and it is to be hoped that this will be the first of many positive, visible outcomes from that Joint Committee meeting.

May I finish by expressing my gratitude to you all for your continued commitment to promoting Japan-UK cooperation. I am confident that the establishment of the AMED London will prove to be a very inspired move. Thank you very much, and please do enjoy our selection of Japanese food and sake.