

The conferment of decoration – Embassy of Japan, London

Speech

Your Excellency, Ambassador Hajime Hayashi, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am deeply honoured to receive the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon and I want to thank the Ambassador for hosting this reception.

In an increasingly uncertain and fragmented world, Japan stands out for its sustained global health leadership and commitment to equity, multilateralism, and peaceful coexistence. Japan, of course, has long been a leader in global health and a passionate advocate for universal health coverage, global health security, and equity. Japan's contributions have helped to strengthen health systems around the world, promote good nutrition and healthy aging, combat antimicrobial resistance, and prepare the world for epidemic and pandemic threats.

As one of our founding funders, Japan played a critical role in CEPI's creation. The Ebola and Zika epidemics that preceded Japan's Ise Shima G7 in 2016 highlighted the need to improve prevention, detection, and response to emerging infectious threats, and the Health Ministers Kobe Communiqué in September of that year called on "the international community, including international organizations, to promote the mobilization of resources in support of new incentives to foster research and development." CEPI was formally established in January 2017.

In addition to being one of CEPI's largest overall investors, Japan made extraordinary contributions to CEPI and COVAX during the COVID-19 pandemic to support global access to COVID vaccines. Thanks to that support, CEPI was able to commit early funding to the development of vaccines including those of Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Novavax, which partnered with Takeda to develop, manufacture, and distribute vaccine in Japan.

We are truly grateful for the contributions of Japanese leaders, scientists, and institutions to our work. Mr Yasu Shiozaki, former Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, is CEPI's first Global Goodwill Ambassador and a powerful voice for global investment in pandemic preparedness. Dr Hiro Suzuki, President of the International University of Health and Welfare, is a member of CEPI's Board, and Professor Ken Ishii is one of the most active members of CEPI's Scientific Advisory Committee and a terrific advocate for the 100 Days Mission. At an institutional level, CEPI has worked with SCARDA, GHIT, NEC, and the University of Tokyo among others.

I was thus greatly honored to be invited to support the development of Japan's health agenda for its 2023 G7 presidency and today am truly profoundly honored to receive The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon decoration. I am humbled by the trust that Japan has placed in me and the CEPI team since the inception of our organization seven years ago and it gives me enormous pleasure that our cooperation and our shared mission to make the world a safer place have been recognized in this way. This prestigious honor is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone at CEPI, so I am delighted to accept it on behalf of myself and my CEPI colleagues.

'Doumo arigato gozaimasu'