

BRINGING THE COVID-19 VACCINE TO ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD

As the world continues to face shortages of COVID-19 vaccines, the Japanese government is actively working to deliver vaccines and contribute to “Last One Mile Support” by building cold chain systems in developing countries and establishing equitable vaccine access in every corner of the world.

Vaccination on a global scale is essential for the early containment of COVID-19. Recognizing the urgency of this need, the Japanese government is conducting various support measures to accelerate fair and equitable vaccine access for people in all countries and regions.

Key among these measures is the distribution of vaccines to developing countries. Japan has disbursed 200 million dollars to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, an international framework for the joint purchase and rapid and equitable distribution of vaccines to people in all countries. At the COVAX AMC Summit, co-hosted by the Japanese government in June this year, Japan announced an additional sum that would bring its total contribution to 1 billion dollars. Furthermore, Japan has distributed vaccines to countries and regions in need through such channels as COVAX. So far, a total of 25 million doses have been delivered, with plans to provide up to approximately 60 million doses in total.

Japan has been supporting the development of the cold chain system, an effort known as “Last One Mile Support,” to ensure the safe delivery of vaccines to developing countries. Those countries often lack suitable infrastructure for transporting and storing COVID-19 vaccines, which must be kept at low temperatures.

In addition to supplying materials, equipment, and so forth to 57 countries in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and Africa through UNICEF, Japan

also supplies six countries and one region with grant aid through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Bilateral grant aid through JICA normally takes more than a year to be finalized due to the time required to work out the details of the aid specification. In this particular case, however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA have been able to accelerate the process, reducing the time to just four months. KUBOKURA Ken, director of the Office for COVID-19 Response at



Japan has delivered vaccines to developing countries through the COVAX facility. The photo shows vaccines manufactured in Japan arriving in Sri Lanka.



Vaccine transport boxes developed by Twinbird Corporation are among the equipment provided by Japan. Since the boxes can draw power from a car's cigarette-lighter socket and are resistant to shaking, they are already being used in Timor-Leste to store and transport vaccines in areas where the power supply is unstable. JICA



JICA, says, “I believe that our longstanding relationship of trust with the health and medical sectors in the partner countries enabled us to obtain the necessary details from them within a short time frame. That is why we were able to start the cooperation promptly.”

JICA's cooperation goes beyond providing materials and equipment, extending to technical cooperation and human resource development. For example, a webinar in which a Japanese expert offered a variety of information on COVID-19 vaccines was attended by 494 people from 68 countries. Also, this past June, JICA supplied 15 high-quality vaccine transport boxes to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and held training sessions on the operation and handling of the equipment. “We load the boxes onto vehicles provided by the Government of Japan. The temperature of the

boxes is properly controlled, and they can be powered from the vehicles, which is beneficial when we deliver vaccines to remote areas where there is no electricity,” a local official commented. “On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, we really want to thank Japan for supporting us in the very difficult time of COVID-19. Going forward, we will work closely with Japan to improve health care for our people.”



In its fight against COVID-19, Japan will continue to actively address the challenges of developing countries and provide comprehensive support for the delivery of vaccines to every corner of the world. ●



Toyota Tsusho Corporation has obtained WHO's medical equipment Performance, Quality and Safety (PQS) prequalification for its refrigerated vehicle for vaccines based on Toyota Motor's Land Cruiser—a first of its kind. The top photo shows a vehicle in use in Ethiopia.