A vaccination management system for newborns has been developed in collaboration with NEC and on what scale. The institute, in collaboration with NEC Corporation and the Kenya Medical Research Institute, has developed the world’s first vaccination management system for newborns, equipping it with biometric authentication to reliably validate guardians’ voices and newborns’ fingerprints. A demonstration test has been underway at a Kenyan hospital since September 2022, with the aim of full-scale introduction into the country by the end of 2023. Kaneko said, “If we can make the technology’s use feasible and more widespread, not only will we be able to manage vaccinations, but we will also be able to obtain big data in the future linked to diverse information such as that related to diseases and the living environment. That could form the basis for various types of research and, I hope, lead to solutions in impoverished areas. We can use the system—originally designed for developing countries with weak IT infrastructure—in developed countries as well, for instance in times of natural disaster.”

Nagasaki University will also work to bolster its research capabilities to prepare for the next pandemic. In April 2022, the university established the DEJIMA Infectious Disease Research Alliance to consolidate the talent and research infrastructure scattered among various institutions on campus. In October of the same year, the Alliance also established the Vaccine Research and Development Center, which has been conducting integrated R&D activities ranging from basic vaccine research to the development of manufacturing processes. Additionally, the Alliance is gearing up to achieve the goals of the 100 Days Mission—unveiled at the 2021 G7 Summit—to develop vaccines within 100 days after the next pandemic is declared. As Professor MORITA Koichi, the Alliance’s director, said, “What’s most important is people.” Beyond the conventional university system, the institute seeks to recruit talented people from outside the medical field and collaborate with private companies and other universities on R&D. “Today, environmental problems and other compounding factors are also causing infectious diseases to spread. I hope that new ideas will come about not just through the incorporation of classical research methods, but also through the suggestions coming from various other fields,” Morita said.

Due to its location, which is particularly open to the world, Nagasaki University has long taken on the threats that infectious diseases pose to humanity. The university will continue to lead infectious disease research, examine the challenges behind such diseases, and work toward better global health using a comprehensive approach.