

Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize @Nairobi, Kenya, August 26, 2016.

Opening speech by Kiyoshi Kurokawa

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues and Friends

It is fantastic to see you all here at this Conference celebrating Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize, on this occasion of **Sixth TICAD** or Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

I have had an honor and privilege of chairing Noguchi Africa Prize Committee, thus an honor to speak to you today.

This is my third visit to this lovely city, Nairobi, and I am glad that African Nations chose this city to host **FIRST TICAD in Africa**.

Who is Dr Noguchi? He was a medical doctor, born in a very poor village in Fukushima, crippled his left fingers by severe burn by fireside when he was a baby. He studied hard to become a medical doctor, went to America, joined Rockefeller Institute at its inception, 1904, from University of Pennsylvania with his mentor Dr Flexner, inaugural President of Rockefeller Institute, now the world premier Rockefeller University.

There he discovered in 1911, the cause of progressive paralytic disease was infection of brain by spirochete, thus it could be treatable ---indeed, that was the case. Based on Rockefeller, he traveled to Latin America to find the causes of many diseases. In 1927 he came to Accra of now Ghana to find the cause of deadly Yellow Fever. However, he died of Yellow Fever in May, 1928, several months of his arrival. He was 51 years-old and perhaps first Japanese or Asian medical scientist who left significant footsteps in Africa.

TICAD began in **1993**, 23 years ago, by the Government of Japan to help development of African Nations, held every five years in Tokyo and Yokohama, with many Heads of States of African Nations.

This Prize began when Prime Minister Koizumi visited African Union in Ethiopia, then visited Accra, Ghana. There, he announced the creation of the Prize to be presented at TICAD in Japan.

The Prize was presented FIRST in 2008, at TICAD4 and the second time at TICAD5 of 2013 or 3 years ago hosted by Prime Minister Abe who hosts this **FIRST TICAD in Africa** which begins tomorrow at Kenyatta International Convention Center.

By the way, this is **the ONLY Prize** of the Government of Japan, thus the award Ceremony is attended by the Emperor and the Empress of Japan and by the Heads of Three Branches of the Government of Japan.

Today, right after this opening session, you will see a short video of the history of this Prize and the message of four Laureates whom I introduce to you now.

This Prize honors two laureates -- one to an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to improve health, healthcare and public health of African people.

Another to an individual who has made critically important important contribution in medical research to advance medical services and practice predominantly affecting African people.

Inaugural Laureates of TICAD4 were, **Dr Miriam Were of Kenya, the host of this Conference** for her contribution to improve community public health services, spreading the concept and daily practice of hygiene and of awareness of prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Another was **Dr Brian Greenwood** of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who came to Africa some 50 years ago, then spent 30+ years primarily in Africa and helped establish standard practices for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of malaria and many other diseases affecting many African people.

In TICAD5, Laureate for public health services was **Dr Alex Coutinho of Uganda** for his leadership in engaging community and multiple stakeholders including even patients with AIDS to advance and spread awareness, prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in particular.

Another was **Dr Peter Piot of Belgium**, now heads London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who went to Zaire in mid-1970s when he learned of mysterious deadly infectious disease killing many people. There, he discovered its cause, now known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever. He spent many years in and on Africa since then, also found in early 1980s, HIV/AIDS are among families and transmissible from mother to children, the fact which was not known in US and elsewhere at that time. Dr Piot furthered his effort resulting creation of UNAIDS.

Today, we are very fortunate to welcome here 3 Laureates, Drs Were, Greenwood and Coutinho. Dr Piot could not come because of a family gathering to a loss his father several months ago and I promised him to convey his message of missing very much this gathering in Nairobi..

I am particularly grateful to Dr Were and her UZIMA Team together with WHO - Regional Office for Africa led by Dr Moeti, that have worked very hard for months to plan and prepare for this Conference.

I am very, very, very happy **particularly to** welcome here **many African Leaders of Tomorrow** working hard to improve the health and health systems for African people. YOU are following the footsteps of Drs Were and Coutinho and they are your aspiration and role model.

I end here by thanking all organizations and individuals involved -- the Government of Kenya and Japan, African Union, WHO-AFRO, UZIMA Foundation, JICA, various educational and research institutions, GHIT Fund, Office of Noguchi Africa Prize **AND** many, many others though I cannot name each as there are so many we owe so much.

All of You have made **this Conference A REALITY** and we are very grateful and THANK YOU AGAIN...

THE END OF SPEECH