

Address by Dr Kiyoshi Kurokawa
Chair, Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Committee

At the Opening Ceremony
The Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Memorial Symposium
Accra, The Republic of Ghana
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Your Imperial Highness Crown Prince of Japan, His Excellency Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, Excellencies, and ladies and gentlemen;

It is my privilege and honor to welcome you all to Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize Memorial Symposium, here in Accra of the Republic of Ghana.

Dr Noguchi was born in 1876 in a very, very poor parents in a very small village of Fukushima. But in early 20th century, Dr Noguchi was one of star scientists of newly established institute in 1904, which has become one of the premier research institutions of the world, Rockefeller University.

He came to Accra, Ghana, in November 1927, at the age of 51 at the prime of his career, to launch his new research endeavor to identify causative agent and develop preventive means for yellow fever, rampant killer disease in many tropical areas including Latin America and Africa.

It was not known at that time what was the cause of the disease, and the concept and the presence of virus was just emerging.

Within few months of arrival in Accra, while setting up his laboratories, he succumbed to yellow fever May 21st, 1928. His body was sent back to New York City in a sealed iron casket in a fear of spread of the disease agent, and has been buried in a Woodland Cemetery in NYC since then.

The Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize is the only award given by the government of Japan. Its inaugural ceremony took place at the occasion of the 4th Tokyo Intl Conference on African Development or TICAD4 in year 2008, in Yokohama, where Dr Noguchi was once a port

quarantine officer before his departure to US in 1900. The date of the ceremony was the first day of TICAD4, May 28th of 2008, and the day exactly 80th year and one week of his death.

The Prize will be given each five years and the award ceremony will coincide with the TICAD meeting with Heads of States and of Governments of African nations. Thus, its fourth award ceremony in year 2023 with TICAD7, may well coincide with the Centennial of his death in Accra, May 28th, if the government of Japan is quite smart and thoughtful of these coincidences.

There are many awards in biomedical and health sciences like Nobel, Lasker, Gairdner, to name a few, but this award is unique and distinguishes itself from others in that;

First, it honors someone who made a major contribution in biomedical and health research in advancing our understanding with major impacts on diseases more specifically burdening and problematic in Africa.

Second, it honors an individual who made a major contribution to improve the status of health of the community, the nation, and eventually of Africa.

The inaugural Laureates of year 2008, are here today with us and deliver each keynote lecture in the morning.

One is Prof Brian Greenwood, Manson Professor of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He began his initial clinical career after his education in Cambridge University and clinical training in UK, came to Africa some 40 years ago against all advices of his teachers and peers who told him 'You are Crazy.' He spent most of his early to mid career over some 3 decades primarily in Africa. He laid foundation of our current understanding of malaria treatment, of Bed-net, most effective against mosquito bites to prevent malaria, and many other medical practices in Africa. Moreover, he trained and nurtured many medical professionals in Africa.

Another is Professor Miriam Were of Kenya. She worked many decades, enlightening and encouraging many people to aware and take action on sanitation and healthy life. When HIV/AIDS began to appear Kenya and its neighbouring countries, she stood beside patients their families and educate communities this disease and contributed to deliver relevant public

policies. Through such action-oriented engagements, Prof Were inspired and nurtured many health professionals and community leaders.

These two Laureates themselves represent the very spirits of Dr Hideyo Noguchi and this Arica Prize named after him, that is, life-long dedication to the well-being of many Africans.

We brought here today, our manuscript (http://www.kiyoshikurokawa.com/jp/files/HideyoNoguchiPrize_Kurokawa.pdf) telling our story on this Award to share with you. Please take a copy for your reading and share the story with your colleagues.

This Symposium of today, is to share our common goals just as I outlined to you.

In closing; taking this opportunity, I wish all of you who are experts and leaders of African health issues, help us to identify highly qualified professionals, and suggest and nominate such worthy candidates to us.

Thank you all and welcome.

END OF SPEECH 748 words - 6 minutes