

JICA Senior Vice President Nakazawa Discusses Japan's Approach to Addressing COVID-19

On November 17, 2020, JICA Senior Vice President Keiichiro NAKAZAWA participated in a one of three panel discussion in the virtual event titled, *T20 COVID-19, East Asia and the Global Response*, hosted by the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University. As one of the series of events of Think 20 (T20) Saudi Arabia, the event served as an opportunity to provide recommendations for the upcoming G20 Summit, scheduled to take place on November 21-22, 2020.

In his remarks, Mr. Nakazawa introduced JICA's three-pronged approach to address COVID-19 and improve global health, focusing on prevention, precaution and treatment. In sharing JICA's comprehensive approach toward improving health resilience and outcomes, Mr. Nakazawa expressed that JICA is committed to aligning its efforts with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's agenda that he introduced at the UN General Assembly to 'leave no one's health behind.'

To kick-off the event, Professor Yaseen Arabi of King Saud bin Abdulaziz University gave opening remarks on behalf of Saudi Arabia and the T20 Presidency. In his remarks, Professor Arabi urged the international community to reinforce the role of health resilience, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and fair and equitable distribution of COVID-19

vaccines. Following Professor Arabi's remarks, Mr. Alan Donnelly, the

Convenor of the G20 Health and Development Partnership, outlined some major achievements that had been established by the Saudi G20 Presidency, including the strong link that had been created between health and investment through the G20 Joint Finance and Health Ministers Meeting. Mr. Donnelly also pointed to other achievements, including the launch of the European Health Union plan. He also shared that the G20 Health Development Partnership is seeking to build in health resilience within the IMF's Article IV consultation.

After these opening remarks, the Director of the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at SAIS, Professor Kent Calder, moderated a panel discussion with distinguished



JICA Senior Vice President Nakazawa (upper right) provides an overview of JICA's approach to COVID-19 response

JICA Senior Vice President Nakazawa Discusses Japan's Approach to Addressing COVID-19

participants, including Dr. Sara Bennett, the Director of Health Systems with the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University; Mr. Vikas Sheel, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Welfare from the Government of India; and Mr. Keiichiro Nakazawa, Senior Vice President of JICA.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Bennett posed several hypotheses for why East Asian countries have been comparatively successful at containing the COVID-19 outbreak in relation to other regions. In her explanation, Dr. Bennett highlighted three main factors that she believes may have supported a strong COVID-19 response in the region: (1) prior regional experience with infectious disease outbreaks; (2) coherent health country responses that have aligned across different levels of the health system, including at the national, state and local levels; and (3) the fast adoption of innovative technologies within the public health system to provide reliable contact tracing mechanisms. Additionally, Dr. Bennett reiterated the importance of achieving health resilience and UHC, which she commended the Government of Japan's leadership.

For his part, Mr. Vikas Sheel, highlighted the Government of India's efforts to strengthen capacity building for the country's public health workers, as well as the government's initiatives to provide insurance coverage for all of India's healthcare workers. Furthermore, Mr. Sheel emphasized India's efforts to rapidly adopt technologies to enable teleconsulting and telemedicine services, as well as its dedication to establish robust IT systems to report COVID-19 cases and trace contacts. He also mentioned India's investments to enhance and expand Health and Wellness Centers across the country.

Lastly, Mr. Nakazawa showcased JICA's extensive work toward realizing the concept of 'Human Security' while focusing on addressing COVID-19 through its three-pronged approach. In his remarks, he also shared that JICA recently launched a campaign called 'Handwashing for Health and Life' that both encourages people to wash their hands and helps construct handwashing facilities to contribute to the prevention of infectious diseases. Furthermore, Mr. Nakazawa referenced Japan's commitment to host the Tokyo Nutrition Growth Summit in 2021 and underscored JICA's role in supporting skills-development at research institutions to combat COVID-19, including at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, which accounts for over 80% of Ghana's PCR tests. In conclusion, Mr. Nakazawa also stressed the importance supporting hospitals to establish integrated functions for treatment, research and human resource development, including for remote medical services. As part of these efforts, Mr. Nakazawa highlighted JICA's commitment to provide opportunities for medical staff in developing countries to come study in Japan at the graduate level.