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PRESS RELEASE

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EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO COUNTER WITH COVID-19 IN VIETNAM (2ND TIME)

-PROVIDING TESTING REAGENTS TO PASTEUR INSTITUTE HO CHI MINH CITY-

Ho Chi Minh city, February 21st, 2020 - As the second step in emergency assistance to counter with COVID-19 in Vietnam, responding to an urgent request from Pasteur Institute Ho Chi Minh City, JICA has decided to provide to the Institute an emergency aid of testing reagents (equivalent to a total of 4 million yen) which is used for rapid detection of COVID-19. Today, at Pasteur Institute Ho Chi Minh City, we handed over the first package of the reagents (approximate 1 million yen)*.

Pasteur Institute Ho Chi Minh City manages 20 provincial centers for disease control (CDCs) of the Southern Region in Vietnam, and has been designated by the Ministry of Health as the leading institution to perform definite diagnosis of COVID-19 suspected cases in the Southern Region.

Vietnam has been exposed to a variety of emerging infectious diseases, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) in 2004. Since 2006, through Japan's government official development assistance (ODA), JICA has been supporting the installation and strengthening of the biosafety level-3 (BSL-3) laboratories in Vietnam that enable safe handling of these high-risk pathogens.

In the ongoing "Project for Capacity Development for Medical Laboratory Network on Biosafety and Examination of Highly Hazardous infectious Pathogens", two long-term experts are dispatched to strengthen the capabilities and collaboration of laboratories network in Vietnam, such as NIHE, Pasteur Institute Ho Chi Minh City and CDCs. Within the framework of this project, JICA has also been supporting Pasteur Institute Ho Chi Minh City in terms of establishing the biosafety level-3 laboratory and enhancing the capacity of examination and biosafety.

JICA, under the leadership of the Government of Japan, will continue to support the Government of Vietnam to combat with COVID-19.

* As already reported on emergency countermeasures to COVID-19 disease on February 7th, responding to request from NIHE, JICA has been providing reagents for NIHE (equivalent to a total of 14 million yen), of those handed over 2.3 million yen. In addition, JICA also supported to other medical institutes, for example: provided personal protective equipment (PPE) for National Tropical Diseases Hospital and so on. The expected total value of support to Vietnam for combating with COVID-19 is equivalent to 20 million yen.

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