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One World, One Fight: Why TICAD 9 Must Put Health at the Heart of Africa-Japan Engagements More Now Than Ever!

This week, leaders from Africa and Japan will gather for the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9). Health will be on the agenda – as it must be, because healthy populations are the foundation for economic growth, stability, and sustainable development.

Africa continues to bear a disproportionate share of the global disease burden: the region accounts for 67% of people living with HIV, 94% of malaria cases and deaths, and nearly half of global TB deaths. These challenges are compounded by climate shocks, economic constraints, disruptions to service delivery, and the lingering impacts of COVID-19.

Over the past two decades, no single partnership has done more to make progress on these health challenges than the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#) (the Global Fund). Since its founding in 2002, the Global Fund has saved 65 million lives, reduced deaths from the three diseases by 63%, and strengthened health and community systems in more than 100 countries.

Japan has been instrumental in this global progress. As a founding father, Japan brought the infectious diseases agenda to the G8 in 2000, paving the way for the creation of this high-impact global partnership. As a longstanding partner and the fifth largest donor of the Global Fund, Japan's US\$5.39 billion in contributions to date has enabled historic progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa and across the world.

For its [Eighth Replenishment](#), the Global Fund needs a minimum investment of US\$18 billion to sustain and accelerate progress to end the epidemics. This investment will save 23 million more lives, prevent 400 million new infections between 2027 and 2029, and deliver a return of US\$19 in health and economic gains for every dollar invested.

The stakes could not be higher. Failing to meet this target risks reversing two decades of hard-won progress against HIV, TB, and malaria while leaving us less prepared for future pandemics.





With just five more years until 2030 and a cascade of interconnected crises straining health systems across the world, we are facing a defining moment for global health solidarity and security.

More now than ever, Japan's monumental leadership is critical.

TICAD 9 is an opportunity to align Japan's enduring commitment to human security with Africa's Agenda 2063 vision of a prosperous, healthy, self-reliant continent. In 2024, 23 African countries increased health spending as a percentage of GDP over 2023 levels. This momentum must continue, backed by Japan's partnership and support for African-led health priorities. A dual approach of robust global partnerships and strong national health budgets is the surest route to ending the epidemics, building stronger health and community systems, and reinforcing pandemic preparedness.

By sustaining the Global Fund's proven partnership model and supporting African leadership in health financing and delivery, TICAD 9 can help secure a safer and more equitable future for all.

Communities and civil society from across Africa and the Asia-Pacific call on Japan to prioritise health as a way forward for sustainable cooperative growth and reaffirm its commitment to UHC and the SDGs. The message from civil society and communities is simple: It is one world, one fight. Leaders of Japan and Africa must work together for our collective future with bold ambition and renewed solidarity.

