

**URGENT REQUEST CONCERNING DRUG AND VACCINE DEVELOPMENT
AGAINST COVID-19 AND EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES
(PART 3 ON PATENT)**

**May 20, 2020
Shizuoka Prefecture**

Japan's responsibility to the international community is to ensure that the Tokyo Olympic Games will be held worry-free from the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. The source of our anxiety lies in having no exit, and the availability of proven drug treatments and a viable vaccine are indispensable to dispel further consternation. Shizuoka Prefecture has advocated for a government-led drug and vaccine development scheme through the National Governors' Association meetings held virtually on four occasions (April 17, April 29, May 12, and May 20). As a result, the heart of our requests was incorporated into the National Governors' Associations' set of recommendations proposed to the Government of Japan on May 13. This third part is a supplement and concerns the management of patents.

The 14 May Financial Times article featured an open letter signed by President Ramaphosa of South Africa and more than 135 former world leaders and other public/academic leaders. Signatories urged that "any vaccine against Covid-19 should be patent-free, produced at scale and made available at no cost to people everywhere." The coronavirus pandemic is a shared vulnerability, and by no means should poorer regions be left to suffer from denied access to vaccines and drugs, especially as we know that diseases affect the poorest of the poor.

To overcome this coronavirus pandemic, all people must have access to effective treatments and a vaccine when they are made available. A highly successful model is the Mectizan Donation Program, which provided the anti-parasitic drug against river blindness and lymphatic filariasis, free of charge, to some of the most remote communities in the world. Professor Omura Satoshi, who was awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of what became Mectizan (ivermectin), waived a portion of his royalty rights and supported the pharmaceutical's collaboration with the World Health Organization to distribute the drug freely or at a highly reduced rate in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. As a result, the program has saved and improved the lives of over a billion people and even eliminated the parasitic diseases altogether in some countries.

The following condition is requested when the drug and vaccine development fund for emerging infectious diseases (hereinafter, the fund) is established:

1. The grantee of the fund agrees in advance to partially waive its royalty payments in the event of a successful production of a new drug and/or vaccine. The Japanese government will purchase them upon consideration of the R&D and production cost. These will be donated to hospitals and developing countries, free of charge, and all countries that request the new drugs and/or vaccines will receive access.

Note:

This urgent request is based on comments made by Governor Kawakatsu Heita during the National Governors' Association video conference on May 20, 2020.