

February 16, 2009

**From Rome, Drafting Global Health Agenda of G8 Summit**



Photo1

On 11th, I went to Paris by the usual Air France last flight departing at 21:55. I have been on this flight so many times for these 3-4 years. You are able to work full day before going to Narita so it is convenient for flying to Europe. London, for instance, it may even be possible to make it for a morning meeting if connection is good because you will arrive by 9:30 or so.

I arrived at Rome via Paris at 9:00 on 12th. The hotel was elegant [St. Regis Hotel](#) I joined with Mr. Banno who arrived from New York and together we prepared for the next day's "Global Health Forum". This Forum is held under the auspices of our [Health Policy Institute](#) and [Aspen Institute Italia](#). Other institutions such as [Rockefeller Foundation](#), etc. are also giving support.

We are trying for the first time to reflect the process of "[Global Health Summit: Toward TICAD, G8 and Beyond](#)" (which we have organized last year) to the G8 Summit which will take place in Italy this year. For this purpose, we held a preliminary meeting last December (Ref. [1](#), [2](#)). Next day, the 13th, the meeting started at last. Venue is within this gorgeous hotel. The opening was "Welcome Speech" by Professor Petroni of Aspen Institute Italia, the joint organizer, and [myself](#). In the end of my speech, I mentioned that the Global Fund was founded through the active work of Japan and Italy at 2000, 2001 Summit, and that the host of 2001 Genoa Summit was current [Prime Minister Berlusconi](#) .

Participants were seated in circle around television screens for discussion. I will show you more photos once they are ready.



Photo2, 3: The conference



Photo4: Mr. Massolo, the Sherpa and Dr. Chan of WHO.



Photo5: Minister Tremonti.



Photo6: From right, Minister of Health, [Dr. Hatem El Gabaly](#), WHO Executive Director, Global Health Workforce Alliance [Dr. Sheikh](#), Executive Secretary of GAVI Alliance [Dr. Julian Lob-Levyt](#), ActionAid International delegate [Dr. Noerine Kaleeba](#) (Dr. Kaleeba is from Uganda).

Many important people such as WHO Director General [Dr. Margaret Chan](#), Aspen Institute Italia President and current Minister of Finance, [Dr. Tremonti](#), Sherpa of Summit in Italy, [Dr. Massolo](#) gathered for this meeting. [Mr. Keizo Takemi](#) was also present. As we were acquainted with each other through participation in Toyako Summit, I informed him about the outcomes we've achieved so far. The members of this meeting were just outstanding. Everyone participated actively in enthusiastic discussions. At a time of such economic disaster, wouldn't it be great if we could contribute to this year's G8 Summit in Italy, however small the contribution is? It would also be good for the presence of Japan in global society.

On this very same day, our article "[Italian G8 Summit: a critical juncture for global health](#)" was published in The Lancet, February 14th, 2009; volume 373, number 9663, p.526-7. We wrote this mainly from "Japan's experience on Global Health". Most contents of The Lancet are free for access On-line for any users with registration. I strongly recommend you to register. Here, I will provide links to the [On-line version](#) and [PDF](#) for your reference.

G7 Finance Ministers' meeting will start from tomorrow in Rome so tonight there will be a reception, I hear. Next week [H8 meeting](#) for discussion on health issues among G8 relations will take place as well as G8 Sherpa meeting. Naturally, people involved are moving very busily.

In the evening, Dr. Peter Singer (Univ. Toronto) (Ref.[1](#), [2](#)) , Dr. Rajeev Venkayya of Gates Foundation, Mr. Banno and I went to a nice restaurant well known around here.



Photo7: From right, Myself, Dr. Peter Singer(Univ. Toronto) , Dr. Rajeev Venkayya at Gates Foundation, Mr. Banno.

Dr. Vankayya said he had seen me more than a decade ago when I was Professor of Medicine at Todai. I started Chief Resident Exchange Program with University of Michigan then, and he was one of the visitors to Todai under this Program. What a coincidence!

**December 12, 2009**

**‘Cartels of the Mind: Japan’s Intellectual Closed Shop’ and ‘Jigyo Shiwake (sorting out operations)’ related to Science Research**

[‘Cartels of the Mind: Japan’s Intellectual Closed Shop’](#), 1997, provides critical insights into the insular mind-set of intellectual establishments of Japanese society. The book was written by [Dr. Ivan Hall](#), an American scholar widely considered as one of the leading ‘expert on Japan’ who studied about Japan (B.A. and M.A. at Princeton University, and Ph.D. at Harvard University) and have stayed in Japan for more than 20 years under various titles, including Professor (as well as correspondent, cultural diplomat, professor at Gakusyuin University and a few other universities). [Its Japanese translation \(1998\)](#) carries a short and straight title, ‘Chi No Sakoku’ or ‘Closed Mind of the Intellectuals’.

The content of this book is as follows:

Introduction: “NORMAL COUNTRY” --Foreign Intellectuals Need Not Apply

1. LEGAL LANDING --The Attorney’s Narrow Beachhead
2. SEGREGATED SCRIBES --The Foreign Correspondents
3. ACADEMIC APARTHEID --The Peripheral Professoriate
4. PASSING PRESENCES --Scientific Researchers and Foreign Students
5. MANIPULATED DIALOGUE --Cowing the Critics

Conclusion: WAKE-UP CALL --Let the Daylight In

Each fact explained in this book is true, and I concur and support his sharp-eyed points. Please refer to an article of interview with [Dr. Hall](#), or [book reviews](#) (Ref.[1\(amazon.co.jp, in Japanese\)](#), [2 \(Amazon.com\)](#)), He also gave [a lecture](#) in Japan three years ago.([Ref.1](#) )

The opinion of Dr. Hall is essentially the same as what I have been pointing out repeatedly (Ref. [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) in Japanese) (Ref.[4](#), [5](#) in English) in this blog posting and elsewhere for a long time. The people with ‘high intellectual levels’ in Japan, university professors are ‘Sakoku (‘closed shop’)’ (Ref.[1 in Japanese](#), [2 in English](#) ) So naturally universities become deprived of stimuli, thus drawing a wrong vision of future to the students in whose hands our future

relies. A society embracing so many graduates from such universities will suffer from the enhanced spread of ‘Sakoku mind’. Is this what we want for [the future of Japan](#)? I urge professors of the Japanese universities to be alert and do something about this.

The message of this book resonates with the analysis and opinion of Karel Von Wolfren, a journalist and another ‘expert on Japan’, as expressed in a series of his books such as ‘The Enigma of Japanese Power’ or ‘A False Realities of a Politicized Society (Japanese title: ‘Japan-a system that do not make people happy) ’.

DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) that took over the administration recently went through ‘Jigyo Shiwake (sorting out programs)’, a very open and simple process of cutting budget off from variety of projects and this became a hot topic. Doesn’t this remind us of ‘Cultural Revolution’ of China sometime ago? Nobel laureates, Presidents of the universities, etc. from academia expressed deep concern and criticism about it, but people at large seemed to have evaluated this process positively as providing transparency in understanding the process of policy decision process. There are, on the other hand, criticisms such as objectives not being clear enough, or the decisions being made in too short a time. Regarding science and technology programs, there were also discussions about how the large-scale research, the Supercomputer project being a typical example, should be conducted. What do you think?

I think that in a large-scale research we should include foreign specialists in the discussion right from the start of planning and open our large scale facilities to scientists of the world as part of the [strategic collaboration of nurturing human resource \(Ref.1\)](#) (both in Japanese). In many cases, I hear shallow excuses of secondary importance such as large scale facility projects that affect Japanese industry foundation must be run by Japanese only, or including foreigners is a risk to patent safety.

We need to consider more seriously about how the [ideas that change the world \(Ref.1\)](#) emerge and come into shape or who comes up with those great ideas. In other words, we should do better on the ways we use our policy planning and funding by the public money. In this context it was good that the new government made policy making process more open to the public.

Again and as always, I must say that scientific community is as ‘Sakoku minded’ as any other Japanese professional community.

**December 20, 2009**

## **Conference at the World Bank – and ‘Let’s work at the World Bank’**

On December 10th and to 11th, I joined a conference organized by the [World Bank](#) in Washington DC, ‘[2009 Global Forum: Building Science, Technology and Innovation Partnership for Building Capacity](#)’

I have been helping plan this meeting [since last year \(Ref.1\)](#) through [this year](#). Dr Peter McPherson ([we met this April](#)) and we wrapped up the session with several recommendations about the role of World Bank in the future.

From Japan, senior councilor Mr Iwasaki of the cabinet administration office and Dr. Ko Ito at JICA gave nice presentations.

The outline of my recommendation was: 1) As is clear from the presentations of two days, each developing country that receives support embrace different priorities (not only poverty, but conditions like primary education, etc), and from variety of stake holders that work on variety of activities for developments, many new model activities to be models could be discussed as emerging successes; Science Academies, Universities, or research centers are implementing their networks, collaborations with embracing developing countries; in the face of the world that is increasingly becoming flat (for instance, cell phones), consider how to take advantage of this new advances; and the importance of taking into consideration the differences and overlapping of ODA policies of each recipient and donor countries. 2) The great advantage of the World Bank is that it has routes of direct communication to every government thus is able to make mid-long term and focused recommendations. 3) These new kinds of successes presented at the conference may not fit neatly to such public institution as a Bank, but Bank could consider it as its policy to spread this sort of projects. 4) Bank could invite people who carried out these successful projects, or its leaders, to serve as ‘World Bank Science Envoys or Ambassadors’. 5) Introduce innovative activities, recognize them as World Bank ‘Flag-ship’ model projects, post them on web sites, search for possibilities of applying them at local communities. By doing so encourage local communities to adapt policies that are practical so as to, in the end, enhance the possibilities of national policies being put into action..

Comments by the participants of this meeting are posted on [YouTube](#) for your reference. I will inform you once reports or websites are ready.

During my stay in Washington DC, I had opportunities to see people such as [Ms Izumi Kobayashi](#), the Executive Vice President at [MIGA](#) of World Bank Groups, one of the [shining Japanese women](#) (she is hopping all over the world), [His Excellency Fujisaki](#), Ambassador to the United States of America, and science attaché of the embassy, Dr. Inutsuka, [Dr. Hitoshi Murayama](#) who is active at University of California at Berkeley and University of Tokyo, [Dr. Calestous Juma](#) ([Ref.1](#)) of Harvard University, [Dr. Ohde](#) of Hitachi Washington DC, and some of senior executives and officials of the National Academy, senior scientists of National Cancer Institute.

Thus, I have been invited for dinner three nights each in DC, by these friends with their friends, thus plenty of time for lively discussions.

The President of the World Bank Dr. Zoelick recently visited Japan. World Bank wants to hire more Japanese staffs and senior staffs. I think even working there just as a transfer for a few years provides you a great chance of learning of developing and widening human network. Also many nice things can happen such as understanding the world movement or advancing your own career and vision for future business opportunities. If you are interested in research careers, World Bank has a history of nurturing so many experts; Dr. Stieglitz of Nobel Prize on Economic or Dr. Nicholaz Stern of the 'Stern Report'- to name just a few. How about thinking big, drawing a larger picture about yourself, your company or even your country? I think this is a very good opportunity.

Thank you so much to everyone who were so kind to me during my stay in Washington DC.



**February 12, 2010**

## **Activities of Health Policy Institute and its ‘Surprising’ Evaluation**

Several years ago, I founded with a few friends a think-tank [‘Health Policy Institute, Japan \(HPIJ\)’](#) and have since been working with my colleagues who share the same vision.

As you may see in our web site, the Institute, as an independent, non-profit, non-partisan private think-tank, [we have focused on three areas](#); to provide platforms, basic data, and issues for policy discussion, to facilitate the participation of civil society groups and patients in the policy making process, to nurture leadership of the civil society, and [Global Health](#). I am happy to say that people with talents and commitments on our common goals have joined and are working with us, including young people who work with us as part of their career. In short, our activities could be described as an effort to encourage Japan’s shift to civil society hence promoting the change of Japan of global world to a responsible civil nation.

We gather at a breakfast meeting once in every two months that function as an opportunity for communication with the members and supporters of our Institute. It has become a custom for me to greet and speak to the participants at this meeting every January. Each and every one of the members are committed to improve health care system in their own way. So, this time, for a change, I suggested my session be primarily [‘Q&A’](#), but asked the audience to raise questions based not on their jobs and positions but from objective critical observation of their positions. It might have been a bit difficult for them because this suggestion came up without prior notice. However, I would like to stress the importance of making it a habit of seeing things objectively and from higher/broader perspective, outside from your background, expertise and position – especially in policy making. I recommend that you always try to see objectively as much as possible as I stated in [‘Japan as seen from outside’](#) and elsewhere, and to think and comment on ‘A part of a big picture’. I have written on this in [a book review](#) also. (3rd paragraph, in Japanese)

HPIJ just organized our annual ‘Health Policy Summit 2010’, a two days’ conference on February 10 and 11. I will report about this in detail soon, but it was a very lively conference with presence of cabinet members of DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan; the administration

party); AKIRA NAGATSUMA, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, YUKIO EDANO, Minister of State for Government Reform (was appointed just February 10th), MOTOHISA FURUKAWA, Senior Vice Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy, Science and Technology Policy, and Government Reform, and Parliamentary Secretaries including KEISUKE TSUMURA, in charge of Science and Technology Policy. Representatives from DPJ legislators Ms YOKO KOMIYAMA, Dr MITSURU SAKURAI, and Dr SATOSHI UMEMURA. Representatives from LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) legislators were Mr JIRO KAWASAKI (former Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) and Mr HIROSHIGE SEKO. From New Komeito, another political party, include former Vice Minister FUKUSHIMA of Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Large number of people from health care sector, patient organizations, academia, business sector, mass media participated to join in vibrant discussions.

By the way, I would like to report to you a very good news, which came in such a no-better timing of our annual conference. The University of Pennsylvania publish its [annual report on the 'Think Tanks' of the world](#). Evaluation of Universities is talked about in many occasions in recent years, but this is ranking of 'Think Tanks'. [For 2009](#), the top think tank in the world was 'Brookings Institution', but in the category of 'Health Policy', 1. Harvard University School of Public Health; 2. Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University... the list went on as expected...but in the 10th place our 'Health Policy Institute of Japan' ranked-in! I was so surprised to see this, but at the same time thought that this was the result of everybody's hard work. Also the high valuation reflects our daily effort of making our activities visible to broader audience of Japan and the world involving various global partners through our website and other means. 'Think Tanks' of governments may outnumber non-governmental ones in many countries including Japan, so ours was a great result. For this yet young and small 'Think Tank', completely independent from the government, to receive such a high evaluation was certainly a great encouragement to us all.

**March 02, 2010**

## **From Botswana - 4**

Photos from Botswana are at;

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/whsaito/sets/72157623508216878/>

I spent 5 full days giving advices in sessions with Botswana government on policy development and implementation.. It was a hard and exhausting task but rewarding at the same time as seen in [local media \(Ref.1\)](#). However, follow-ups are equally important. Botswana expects a lot from Japan so we - Japanese government, business sector, and universities - should all work harder together. From here, the private sector, in part with our government, is expected to take leadership in developing partnership with Botswana government. [Akita University](#) has also begun collaboration with Botswana. This is wonderful!

The [advantages](#) of [Botswana](#) is its huge land (1.5 times of Japan), rich variety of natural resource, highest level of maintenance of natural reserve and potential for wonderful tourism, existence of largest number of lions and elephants and other wild life, compulsive education being provided to all citizens, English as an official language, stable government, society in good order/security, GDP of USD\$6,000/person, etc. Its weak points are; population of only 2 million, diamond being the highest percentage (40%) of government revenue, about 20-30% of the population in poverty, HIV/AIDS still dominant though reducing, etc. However, I think that the highest potential lies in the fact that this nation is located in the center of southern half of Sub-Saharan.

In this global age, how can Botswana take their advantages while managing their disadvantages? This viewpoint is the basis of recommendations for policy making of Botswana.

**March 15, 2010**

**From Accra, Ghana – 3**



March 10th started with a visit to Achimota Hospital ([Photo](#)) located at the suburb of Accra. The hospital stands within the site of [Achimota School](#) the most prestigious school of Ghana established in 1927. The school is known for producing a large number of talents through its high ideals as manifested in its school emblem; that (starting in the context of school life), black and white, male and female, should integrate and combine synergistically for the good of all. This idea was revolutionary, especially in the 1920s when the school was established. Achimota hospital used to serve to this school. Many African leaders including three presidents of Ghana after independence are alumni of this school. Achimota school reminds us that nurturing human resource through a long-term vision is always, in any time of history and any nation, the highest priority.

By the way, it is so a ‘British’ style that they have a Golf Course here. It is the distinguished [Achimota Golf Club](#). Top schools in Britain and U.S. often have golf courses within their school premises.

At the hospital, many nurses are working together with the director and doctors (there are four Doctors). They have one computer for the whole clinic. Patients are moved to larger hospitals in the city if surgical operations are needed. About 200 pregnant mothers visit the clinic every day. While we were there a baby was newly born. We were with Drs Greenwood and Were and all hospital people, nurse and patients, were happy to see Dr. Were being so popular. She is truly the heroine of Africa.

We then moved on to [‘Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research’](#) established by the government of Japan. (Photos are included in the slide show above). The Institute is located within the huge premise of [University of Ghana](#) (Ref.1, 2) at Legon, the suburb of Accra. Scientists from University of Tokyo and Medical and Dental University are participating in researches on HIV/AIDS, H1N1, and so on. It is very encouraging to see the progress of research projects moving. I fully enjoyed the tour of the institute as well as active discussion with the scientists.

At lunch time, I looked up at the sky and incidently saw the [‘Circle Rainbow: Halo](#), (Photo on top) a rainbow around the sun just above us. It was a nice surprise.

Leaving the Institute, we headed to next destination, the laboratory used by Hideyo Noguchi 82 years ago. HIH Crown Prince has been here just a day before. The lab is part of the University Hospital of University of Ghana in Accra city, separate from the Legon campus. I noticed the signatures of HIH Prince and Princess Takamado in the guest book dated 1993. What was it like to be here 80 years ago, I wonder. Among the exhibition was a telegram sent from Hideyo to his wife in New York City. The telegram was sent by [‘Western Union’](#) a telegram and communication service company which I wrote about in the context of ‘Japan as a closed country’. Of course, I saw ‘Western Union’ offices here and there in [Ghana and Botswana](#) as I traveled. The service is operated throughout the world except 5 countries including Japan. This is truly a strange situation for a country like Japan.

In the evening, I was invited by HE Ambassador Katagami to a dinner at the Embassy of Japan. The embassy was beautiful with a large garden. This day the weather was not too hot which was a treat for us. [‘Takai’](#), a specialty of Ghana was served as digestif. The taste was somewhat like Tia Maria, very nice, and I had to control myself from asking for too much.

By the way, Ghana is known for produce of [cocoa](#). It is the nation's major industry. Also, oil was discovered at Off Shore recently. 'Ghana' chocolate is very popular in Japan, but here the chocolate will not melt even at this high temperature. I was told that its taste does not match Japanese or many people, thus may not have commercial value..

Late in the evening, I left to Accra airport heading for Narita via London. I have traveled 18 days since February 23th and thia last leg is for two nights on the plane.

Now this trip is coming to an end.

**March 28, 2010**

## **D-Lab of MIT - A Thrilling Day With Young Leaders Who Sought Careers Abroad**

Early in the morning of 20th (Sat.), after arriving at Narita from Singapore, I rushed to my home, had a shower, refreshed, and went off to GRIPS, my base office.

Today at GRIPS, we, our 'Innovation Team' at GRIPS, host a day of [D-Lab of MIT](#) under the theme of "['Universities' X 'Technologies' X 'BOP'](#)" (in Japanese) . D-Lab is, as I introduced several time in this web site, a new and exciting program for undergraduate students, preparing them for this global age. The day's event was organized by [Tsuchiya-kun](#), [Endo-kun](#) ([Ref.1](#)), and Riku-san , all involved in D-Lab at MIT. Just 3 days ago in the evening, I saw [Professor Miyagawa of MIT](#) ([Ref.1](#)) and talked about this event at GRIPS. He was very pleased to hear our plan.

Quite a number of people signed-up online and our auditorium at GRIPS was nicely filled with participants. Speakers and panels were all very good and there were lots of questions and answers, so I think the participants were quite satisfied with the event. I wrapped up the session with focus on the meaning and impact of the 'D-Lab'.

The reception continued for 3 hours, probably reflecting the high satisfaction and enthusiasm among the participants. Everyone was quite excited.

You may find a site of [D-Lab team in Japan](#)(in Japanese) and [a hot posting by Mr. Matsushita](#) interesting. Through a day session, I felt that many young people sensed the global age, opened their eyes to great goals, unlimited possibilities. I thought that someone uploaded a live video-record on the web.... Trying to check it out...

I would say that the main driving force of the success of this event was the [three young men and woman who organized this](#) (in Japanese); [Endo-kun](#) (in Japanese) and [Tsuchiya-kun](#) (in Japanese) earned their Master's degree in Japan and now for Ph. D. degree at MIT/Harvard, Riku-san studied undergraduate at MIT after graduating from the Japanese high

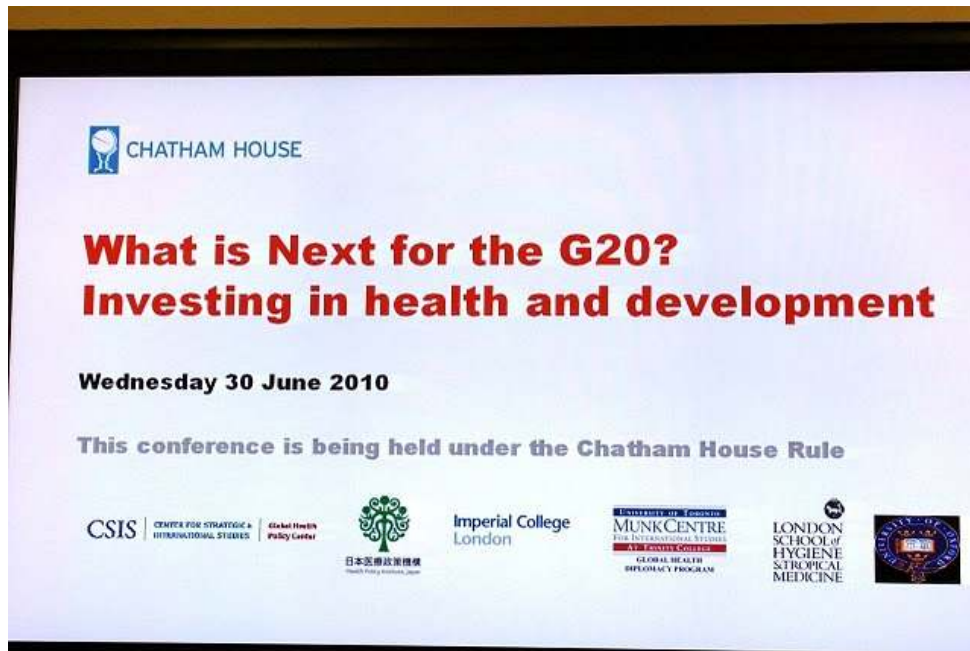
school. They apparently have been involved with D-Lab projects in various ways. Now many young people in Japan saw and met these three mission and action-oriented three youth trying to reach out and speak their minds and hearts.

These three teach us clearly how 'going for what you want to do' is so important, how the experience make you see wider pictures and grasp opportunities. I recommend that you too, by all means, make up your mind and why not try to see the wide world to find what you really want to do and what you can do to make the world a better place.



July 05, 2010

At Chatham House: From G8 to G20, Issues on Health and Development



Photos by the courtesy of [NHK Asian Voice](#) and [HPI-Japan](#)

[Chatham House](#) in London is more formally known as [The Royal Institute of International Affairs](#), one of the world's top Think Tanks on international issues, a place for debates, famous also for the rule often referred to as the '[Chatham House Rule](#)'

This Chatham House, [CSIS, an American Think Tank in Washington DC \(Ref.1\)](#), and our [Health Policy Institute Japan](#) have spent about a year preparing for this meeting at the Chatham House which was held on June 30. The meeting was scheduled at the timing of the G8 Summit in Canada that took place a few days earlier, and the theme of the meeting was '[Global Health: What's next for the G20? Investing in health and development](#)'.

[Its agenda](#), [panel speakers](#), and [sponsors](#) were all superb. I understand that the total number of participants was around 200. [Dr. Shigeru Omi](#) (in Japanese), former regional director of WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, represented the government of Japan. Also, some Japanese officials in London were present including Minister Oka of Japan Embassy, from JETRO, and NHK crew came to report this meeting. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to them all.

Now and in the future, such process of independent Think Tanks or other non-governmental institutions hosting and organizing conferences to set global agendas to lead discussions that in the end can come up with some overall understandings or agreements is and will be extremely important. Organizing and participating in such conferences have been a very good experience to us, too. I myself was honored to have a role of listening to the discussions of the day and wrapping them up in the closing. We also tried to make clear what we could do with the outcomes of this meeting, or what our next steps could be.

These things are easy to say, but actually to reach to this point was truly a tough task. I did write [several postings on this process in this site](#) ([Ref.1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) in addition to [the reports](#) which are posted on the web site of the Health Policy Institute, Japan. Most importantly, we must understand that in the global world, building ‘personal’ credibility/trusts’ amongst ‘colleagues of the world’ is the basis of everything.

It seems to me that one of the fundamental problems of Japan lies in the conventional attitude of the majority of the Japanese people who think that those global issues must be handled by ministries in charge, i.e. government offices or bureaucrats, or big companies if talking about industry. In other words, our society is not yet mature enough as the ‘Civil Society’ - at least in my view.

So, let us all together nurture as many human resources and capitals as possible who are capable of taking actions based on the deep understanding of the importance of actions by independent individuals who do not necessarily rely on ‘governmental authorities’, as well as the importance of development of mutual trusts in individual levels, particularly in this ‘global’ and ‘flat’ world.