

Keynote Speech by Yasuhisa Shiozaki
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Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and dedicated partners in global health,

Good afternoon. I am Yasuhisa Shiozaki, serving as a member of the Global Leaders Group (GLG) on AMR. First of all, I would like to thank all of you for your participation and contribution for the 6th Tokyo AMR One-Health Conference. As we are closing this one-day meeting on our fight against AMR, I would like to focus on some of the major challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us.

This conference in Tokyo, a beacon of hope and collaboration, has brought together minds and spirits from across the Asia Pacific and the globe to tackle one of the most daunting challenges of our times --- antimicrobial resistance. Born from the ambitious Tokyo Meeting of Health Ministers on AMR in Asia Pacific in 2016, which I had the honor to co-chair, this initiative has grown into a formidable force advocating for change and action in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

As we look towards the upcoming second UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AMR in September, it is imperative to acknowledge the significance of this moment. We must be mindful of the fact that this meeting in New York will not be just another conference: it represents a watershed moment for global health, a chance to alter the course of AMR, a challenge that threatens the very fabric of modern medicine and to plunge us back into the dark days where a simple infection could mean a death sentence.

The scale of this threat cannot be overstated. AMR already claims 1.27 million lives annually, according to Lancet, a testament to our collective failure to address the misuse and overuse of antimicrobials across human, animal, and environmental health sectors. This crisis of antimicrobial resistant bacteria, even invading the global environment, consequently threatens the very sustainability of society and human welfare, transcending borders and affecting all regions and income levels without discrimination. It is further aggravated by factors such as poverty, inequality, and issues related to access just as in the case of the climate change challenges.

Despite these daunting facts, there remains a window of opportunity through the potential of worldwide solidarity and action. As a member of the Global Leaders Group and someone who has navigated the corridors of political power struggle, I understand the complexities and the intricacies of turning concern into concrete action. The political landscape surrounding AMR inevitably faces challenges, from conflicting interests across sectors to the sheer scale of coordinating global response efforts.

The ongoing discussion on establishment of a UN AMR Independent Panel could mark a significant step forward. This panel must be empowered to work across the political, economic, and sectoral interests, to set ambitious but achievable targets, and to ensure these targets resonate across all levels of governance and society.

Our discussions within the Global Leaders Group have highlighted key areas for action – from bolstering the R&D pipeline for new antimicrobials and diagnostics to ensuring equitable access and addressing the critical financing gaps that hinder effective AMR response. As a sub-group leader for initiatives on R&D, access and financing, together with the Deputy Prime Minister of Malta, Dr. Chris Fearn, we are acutely aware of the urgency and the gravity of our mission.

But urgency alone is not enough. We must translate this urgency into a shared vision and concrete actions. The UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AMR must serve as a change agent for this transformation, forging international commitment and political will to address AMR head-on. We need commitments that go beyond mere words, integrating AMR responses into the core of national and global policies, and backed by the necessary resources and accountability mechanisms.

This year, as we gather from different corners of the world, our mission is clear. We must harness the collective will to advocate for a robust and actionable global response to AMR. The Tokyo AMR One-Health Conference has catalyzed this dialogue, but it is up to us to carry this momentum forward, to advocate, to innovate, and to act.

We stand at a pivotal juncture in our fight against AMR. The decisions we make, the alliances we forge, and the actions we take will have a lasting impact for generations to come. This is our moment to redefine the legacy of global health, to ensure that antibiotics remain a cornerstone of medical treatment, and to safeguard the health and well-being of future generations.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to each of you for your dedication and your commitment to this cause. The road ahead is long with challenges, but together, there is no obstacle we cannot overcome. Let us move forward with resolve, with unity, and with

the unwavering belief that we can and will make a difference in the global fight against antimicrobial resistance.

Thank you for your attention, your commitment, and your action. Together, let us shape a future where health, in all its forms, is safeguarded for all.

Thank you very much.