



## **MINISTRIES OF HEALTH OF GHANA AND JAPAN SIGN MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION**

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has signed a five-year Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare with the objective of enhancing Japan's support for Ghana's health sector.

The cooperation which falls under the Japanese ministry's flagship programme; Africa Health and Wellbeing Initiative, is a component of Japan's contribution to helping with the implementation of national interventions aimed at achieving universal health coverage and quality health care.

At the signing ceremony in Accra, the Minister of Health, Mr. Kwaku Agyemang-Manu, who signed on behalf of Ghana, said the modalities and responsibilities required of both countries would be decided at a meeting later.

Under the MoC, both countries would seek to cooperate with local governments and health sector agencies in each other's country and work out modalities for further collaboration as may be mutually decided on.

The main areas of cooperation would include improving hygiene, sanitation, health promotion, disease prevention and early medical intervention. The cooperation would also focus on supporting prevention, control and treatment of both communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as improving reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health services as a means to reducing mortality, morbidity and environmental sanitation.

Mr. Agyemang-Manu said under the agreement, Japan would send experts and resources to aid Ghana's health sector to innovate and improve health service delivery and outcomes. He further said the initiative was worthy of the highest recognition, especially because it focused on ensuring the wellbeing of Ghanaians and achieving universal health coverage for the country.

The Ambassador of Japan to Ghana, Mr. Tsutomu Himeno, who signed for his country, said the initiative was important for building a foundation of quality and productive manpower, and gave opportunity to the private sector to contribute to health care in Ghana.

He also called for more investments to be made into health care, particularly in the area of prevention since that would lessen the burden on the healthcare system and save the country a lot of money.

Ghana and Japan on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to establish mechanisms for creating vibrant and healthy societies through enriching health services.

Mr. Kwaku Agyeman-Manu, the Minister of Health, signed for Ghana while Mr. Tsutomu Himeno, the Ambassador of Japan to Ghana, signed for his country.

The main areas of cooperation are enhancing health promotion, prevention and early intervention with focus on improving hygiene and sanitation, changing life skills and eating nutritious foods.

Others are supporting prevention, control and treatment of Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases; improving reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health services to reduce mortality and morbidity; improving on sanitation and providing better access to hygiene.

The cooperation would also help Ghana to facilitate licensing and distribution of medical products such as vaccines and build human capacity in the health sector.

Mr. Agyeman-Manu said the partnership was to ensure the wellbeing of Ghanaians by ultimately helping to achieve a Universal Health Coverage.

“It is an example of the kind of partnerships we seek with our development, bilateral and private sector partners towards ensuring a healthy and productive population for national development,” he said.

The Sustainable Development Goal 17, the Minister said, was about partnership and the MoC, therefore, made it real.

“I believe the time is right for us to think innovation in health and also to actively engage in partnerships that will drive our health outcomes positively.”

The Minister said after five years, the two countries would assess and decide on whether to renew the cooperation depending on its outcomes and fruitfulness.

Mr. Agyeman-Manu gave the Japan Government an assurance that resources put into the support would not be wasted and commended it for the continuous support towards Ghana's development.

Mr. Tsutomu, on his part, said health was an important contributor to the quality of life of a nation and that the partnership would help build the foundation of a productive manpower for the nation.

It would also build opportunities for the private sector including Japanese companies in Ghana to contribute to the growth of the health sector, he said.

Mr. Tsutomu noted that even though Japan was prepared to help Ghana move beyond aid, the journey would not be easy considering the many parts of the country, especially northern Ghana, which lacked access to basic medical facilities.

However, he said, it was possible and suggested that Ghana focused more on the preventive side of healthcare by implementing policies to that effect.

The Ambassador explained that preventing diseases saved a nation huge sums of money and called on the Government to invest more in disease prevention mechanisms.

"The element of prevention in this initiative or partnership is one of the many reasons for which I am happy to sign this cooperation."

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