

DR TAKESHI KASAI

Director of Programme Management and Deputy Regional Director
Regional Office for the Western Pacific
World Health Organization Region
United Nations Avenue, Manila, Philippines
Tel: +63 2 528 9921



Summary: Dr Takeshi Kasai (M.D./Ph.D.) is a dedicated public health expert who combines vision and leadership with solid diplomatic and management skills. He has a strong record of achievements during a career that spans all levels of public health - from providing health services in remote settings to working on the global stage to help craft health policy.

Work Experience

Full-time

- 2014 to now — Director of Programme Management, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office(WPRO)
- 2012 to 2014 — World Health Organization Representative to Viet Nam
- 2010 to 2012 — Director of Division of Health Security, WPRO
- 2006 to 2010 — Regional Adviser, Surveillance and Response, WPRO
- 2004 to 2006 — Deputy Director General, Health and Welfare Bureau, Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan
- 2003 to 2004 — Director of Office of WHO, International Affairs Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan
- 2000 to 2003 — Medical Officer, WPRO
- 1996 to 2000 — Deputy Director and International infectious diseases adviser, Division of Infectious Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW)
- 1994 to 1995 — Medical Officer, Bureau of Statistics, International Affairs Division, MHW
- 1990 to 1994 — Medical Officer, Iwate Prefectural Government

Adjunct Positions

- 2018 — Visiting Professor, KEIO University School of Medicine
- 2015 — Visiting Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Osaka City University
- 2012 — Visiting Professor, Iwate Medical School

Education and Awards

Education

- 2017 — Iwate Medical School, Ph.D. in Medicine
- 1997 — The Royal College of Physicians of London, Diploma on Tropical Disease
- 1996 — London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Master's degree in Public Health
- 1990 — Keio University School of Medicine, Medical Doctor Degree, Medical License

Awards

- 2016 — Takemi Keizo Seizon Kagaku Kinen Award
- 2014 — Awarded Viet Nam "For the People's Health" Medal for work as WHO country director
- 1999 — Keio University, School of Medicine, Sanshikai Encouragement Award
in recognition of contribution to strengthen infectious diseases control in Japan

Major Achievements

OVERVIEW: As the Director of Programme Management and Deputy Regional Director for the largest and most diverse WHO region, Dr Kasai brings uncommon operational and technical mettle to his work. He oversees all technical divisions and country offices while working to consolidate gains from reforms that have strengthened technical capacity and support at the country level across the Region. This long track record of health achievements at the local, regional and global levels has sharpened his ability and focus to help countries prepare for complex health challenges on the horizon — from NCDs and ageing to infectious disease outbreaks and other global health security threats.

At the global level...

Health Security is one of Dr Kasai's most pronounced technical strengths. He has managed health security threats across local, national and global settings, with extensive experience addressing emerging infectious diseases, including SARS, dengue, measles, cholera, avian influenza, etc.

During his tenure as a WHO Medical Officer, Dr Kasai first **introduced and expanded the DOTS strategy** for tuberculosis control across the Western Pacific Region.

Later, **Asia Pacific Strategy of Emerging Infectious Diseases (APSED) (2006-2012)** would become the crystallization of these operational knowledges he worked to develop and refine. APSED highlights the concept and practice of **event-based surveillance**. Through APSED, detection and response capacity in Asia and the Pacific has improved drastically. Now, event-based surveillance has become the model technique practiced globally.

The ability to **support a country's health system development** is another of Dr Kasai's strengths. As the WHO Representative to Viet Nam, he was awarded the "For the People's Health Medal" for his contributions to **revise National Health Insurance Law in Viet Nam (2012-2014)**. He was also remembered by his effective support to country in implementing health related MDGs.

As the Director of Programme Management, he has demonstrated his strong leadership in WHO management and introduced changes in many front from meeting management system to programme implementation. After he took office in 2014, the implementation has increased and reached 99% in 2016-2017. He is also known as strong advocates for diversity and **increased female staff proportion from 36% in 2014 to 45% in 2017**.

At the national level...

As a Medical Officer in the national Government, Dr Kasai introduced **the health system approach** to strengthen national capacity, especially with **infectious diseases**. He focused on the interface of international and domestic health, with the understanding that global health links health issues beyond boundaries.

Influenza pandemic plan (1997): Japan is the second country (after USA) to have issued a national response plan for pandemic influenza. Dr Kasai led the development of the national plan.

The New National Infectious Diseases Control Law (1997): Dr Kasai led the Government team that revised the country's long-standing infectious diseases control law. While honouring human rights concerns, he introduced a surveillance system that integrated STIs and HIV/AIDS.

Hashimoto Initiative Report on Global Control of Parasitic Disease (1998): In response to the call from the then-Prime Minister Hashimoto, Dr Kasai formalized the Report emphasizing the need for global collaboration on parasitic disease control, which guided policy recommendations at the G8 Summit in Birmingham in 1998. He was then involved in development of the Global Fund and attended Board Meeting as an Alternate Board Member of Government of Japan.

Dr Kasai's experience is not limited to infectious diseases: He was a member of the team that developed the **Japan National Survey for Home Deliver Care (1994)** and worked in disease coding and **analysis of national disease burdens**.

Dr Kasai stresses that improving health systems is a fundamental approach to improve health outcomes. This conviction has been strengthened through his **leadership experience at the local level**. While working in the Miyazaki Prefecture, his efforts lead to successful implementation of the **Districts Health Plan (2004-2006)**. He also led implementation of **prefectural NCD plan** known as "Healthy Miyazaki Movement" and successfully introduced new campaign on NCDs.