

# Japan and the World in the Era of COVID-19:

## Considering whether the new paradigm is a crisis or an opportunity



In collaboration with the  
**APRU Population Aging Program Hub**

COVID-19 has had significant impact on peoples, countries, and the world, and it is thought that it will bring about earth-shattering changes in the future. Examining Japan's response to the first wave of COVID-19, it was found that there were vulnerabilities in its informational infrastructure as well as delays in innovations and their social implementation. These all need to be urgently strengthened before the second wave strikes.

In this seminar, the broad range of effects the virus has had will be analyzed from multiple perspectives. In addition to explaining current measures, proposals will be made on actions that need to be urgently undertaken in preparation for a second wave as well as on what policies should be introduced in the next six months to create a new society with COVID-19. We will hear expert views as well as both Japanese and international political perspectives from those who have been actively involved in our fight against COVID-19.

- There will be four live (Japanese language) seminars at 17:00–18:30 (JST)
  - Seminar 1: Health and Science & Technology, on June 17
  - Seminar 2: Economy and Work, on July 1
  - Seminar 3: Society and Law, on July 15
  - Seminar 4: Summing Up, on July 29
- Live seminars will be conducted entirely in Japanese; however, the speakers listed on the following pages will also make video recordings of their presentations in English.
- The English videos will become available after the live seminars in Japanese. Once available, a notification e-mail will be sent to registrants.
- A live wrap-up discussion in English is scheduled at 18:30–19:00 on July 29 (Wed.), immediately after Seminar 4. The panelists will answer pre-selected questions from the audience.

### Date & Time

### **LIVE SEMINAR in English: Wrap-up discussion**

July 29 (Wed.), 2020 18:30–19:00 (JST) after Seminar 4

### Registration

Registration can be made via this link:

[https://keio-univ.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Mks9cByPST-qJmB7Qs5x8w](https://keio-univ.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Mks9cByPST-qJmB7Qs5x8w)



The presentations below will be made available as English video recordings.

### 1. COVID-19 countermeasures in the Asian region: Lessons learned and future outlook



#### **Takeshi Kasai**

Regional Director of the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office

Dr Takeshi Kasai began his term as WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific on 1 February 2019, following his nomination by the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific and his appointment by the WHO Executive Board.

The public health career of Dr Kasai began nearly 30 years ago when he was assigned to northeast coast of Japan, providing health-care services for the elderly. In the mid-1990s, Dr Kasai attended the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, where he studied in the Department of Global Health and Development and received a master's degree in public health.

Dr Kasai has worked for WHO for more than 15 years, and at the time of his nomination was Director of Programme Management at the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific in Manila, Philippines. He also served as a Technical Officer and later as the Director of the Division of Health Security at the Regional Office and the WHO Representative in Viet Nam from 2012 to 2014.

#### **Abstract:**

While we are relieved that, none of the countries in our Region, except Hubei Province in China in the earlier months of the outbreak, have experienced large-scale community transmission for now, we are conscious that the pandemic is far from over.

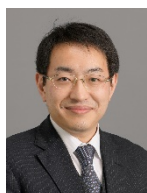
The key to controlling COVID-19 in the Region has been proactively finding and isolating the cases of COVID-19, tracing and quarantining contacts, multisource surveillance; and community engagement. In addition, stringent public health distancing measures, including movement controls, were introduced comparatively early in the outbreak. These measures have averted what would have been devastating consequences of an uncontrolled COVID-19 epidemic.

But we must also recognize that the socioeconomic costs of some of these control measures have been enormous. Furthermore, this virus has attacked the shortcomings of societies and revealed the various challenges which we need to confront.

Countries are facing a profound and complex challenge: how to control COVID-19 in our communities, while at the same time, bringing back our economies and societies. In moving forward, we should create a new normal in which we don't have to choose between health and livelihood. Rather, we should bring up both. The big decisions on how to do this need to be made together, bringing the health sector, economic sector and community at one table. In taking those actions IT and innovation will take an important role.

We have spent a lot of time preparing for the next pandemic in this Region. That future is now here. So many people have suffered from COVID-19. I believe it is not just our responsibility to respond to COVID-19. Rather, we have an obligation to make our societies and health systems stronger and better prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow.

### 2. Factor X: Why did Japan dodge the bullet of a medical crisis?



#### **Jin Nakahara**

Professor, School of Medicine, Keio University / Deputy Director, KGRI

Jin Nakahara is based in Tokyo, Japan as a Professor of Internal Medicine at the Keio University School of Medicine. He also serves as a Deputy-Director of KGRI. Prof. Nakahara received his M.D. from the Keio University School of Medicine in 2003, and his Ph.D. from the Keio University Graduate School of Medicine in 2007. He holds active memberships with many professional societies in Japan and abroad, and he is a Director of the Japanese Society of Neuroimmunology and the Japan Multiple Sclerosis Network. He also serves as a committee member of the Central Organizing Committee of PACTRIMS, a Delegate of the Japanese Society of Neurology, and a Councilor of the Japanese Society of Internal Medicine.

#### Abstract:

On January 15, 2020, the first COVID-19 patient was confirmed in Japan. Then in the following February, the fateful Diamond Princess cruise ship returned to Japan, with 712 confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infected cases. With a growing number of COVID-19 patients in Japan and across Asia, by early March many countries including the United States started to consider banning Japanese tourists. Unexpectedly, however, the outbreak expanded into the Europe and the American continent, resulting in a sharp and explosive rise in the number of COVID-19 cases, leaving Japan far behind. By late March, many experts warned that Tokyo will face a “medical crisis” within a couple of weeks, just as New York is suffering now. On April 7, a state of emergency was declared in Japan, with a much less stringent “voluntary lockdown” compared to other nations. Nevertheless, the number of casualties per capita in Japan remains around 1–2% of the United States or European nations. If not a miracle, what was the “factor X” which enabled Japan to dodge the bullet of a medical crisis?

### 3. Medtech Ecosystem—learn what one can learn from COVID-19



#### **Kenjiro Takemura**

Professor, Faculty of Science and Technology, Keio University

Kenjiro Takemura received his Ph.D. in integrated design engineering from Keio University in 2002. He stayed on at the Department of Mechanical Engineering as a Research Associate, before moving to the Precision and Intelligence Laboratory at the Tokyo Institute of Technology as an Assistant Professor from 2003 to 2008. He joined the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the Faculty of Science and Technology at Keio University in 2008 where he is currently a Professor. During this time he was a visiting scholar twice; at Monash University and UC San Diego in 2006 and 2019, respectively. His research interests are in ultrasonic transducers, functional fluids, automated cell culture systems, haptic interfaces, and soft robots.

#### Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the entire globe. Measures against the novel coronavirus, for which there is currently no vaccine or silver bullet, are extremely primitive as symbolized by the phrases “Stay at Home” and “Social Distancing.” Consequently, our lives have changed drastically. Efforts to withstand the inconvenience and regain our original lifestyles are important, but major reform of the social structure to make the coming era of post/with COVID-19 more robust will be essential to prepare for the next crisis. In order to make the medical system, which is one of the most important infrastructures supporting life in our society, more robust and efficient, I am proposing a new *medtech ecosystem* which includes voices from the medical front and real world based on what we have learned from emergent projects against COVID-19.

## Seminar 2: Economy and Work (Presented live in Japanese on July 1)

The presentations below will be made available as English video recordings.

### 1. Economic policy measures in the time of the Corona crisis



#### **Keiichiro Kobayashi**

Research Director, Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research/Guest Professor,  
Faculty of Economics, Keio University

After receiving a master's degree in engineering from the University of Tokyo in 1991, Keiichiro Kobayashi joined the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. He then earned a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Chicago in 1998 before joining the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry.

In 2013, he became a professor at the Keio University Faculty of Economics. From 2019-20, he joined the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research as a Research Director, while remaining at the Faculty of Economics, Keio University as a visiting professor.

#### **Abstract:**

The containment of economic activity to reduce contact between individuals becomes necessary when the number of infected people exceeds the capacity of the medical system. If we can effectively increase testing, contact tracing, and the isolation of those who test positive, then the spread of infection may be slowed and the likelihood of being forced to shut down the economy is reduced. Thus, increasing the capacity of both testing and medical care is the primal measure of economic policy in the time of COVID-19.

I also argue that an income-contingent subsidy is the most effective way of supporting individuals who face economic difficulties during the pandemic. It is also likely that, after the COVID-19 crisis has passed, internationally coordinated fiscal reconstruction will be on the agenda for economic policy.

### 3. Working in the era of a new normal



#### **Sachiko Kazekami**

Associate Professor, Faculty of Business and Commerce, Keio University

Associate Professor Sachiko Kazekami graduated from the Keio University Faculty of Business and Commerce and went on to receive her Ph.D. from the Graduate School of Business and Commerce in 2011. She specializes Labor Economics. In 2014, she was a visiting researcher at the University of California, Berkeley. Currently, she serves as the Executive Director of the Japan Society of Human Resource Management and is a member of several government committees relating to labor analysis, job creation projects for local revitalization, youth employment, and the national land council, among others.

#### **Abstract:**

When the Japanese government declared a state of emergency in response to the spread of COVID-19 in April, 5.97 million people were forced to take a leave of absence from work. In particular, compared with April year, the number of non-regular employees not working saw a significant increase of 2.4 million people, while for full-time employees, this was much lower at 1.13 million. Many firms introduced remote work, especially in Tokyo. On April 7, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported which jobs were highly affected by COVID-19 and which jobs were not. Jobs that are highly affected by COVID-19 partly overlap with jobs that have a high probability of being computerized by the 4th industrial revolution. Is this a mere coincidence? If we consider this issue, we can reach some conclusions as to why some employees cannot work remotely, how we should deal with jobs that cannot be done remotely, and what we should be aware of when we can work remotely. We need to think about the things we should do as individuals, what considerations we should make for others, and what policies we should have. Investigating these issues will accelerate necessary innovations to achieve a more ideal society beyond the crisis.

**\*More speakers will be added shortly**