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Accelerating healthcare innovation in a post-pandemic world

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It's estimated that one in three people in developing countries can't get essential medicines on a regular basis. Even in countries considered developed, patients who have to pay for medical treatment out of pocket often find it hard to access or afford the healthcare and medicines they need. Geographic hurdles hinder remote populations, substandard healthcare infrastructures limit reliable diagnoses, and precise medical knowledge is restricted to a small number of specialists. These barriers make it difficult to treat those in serious need.

While improvements in care, clinical innovations, and drug deliveries continue to advance, access to these advancements remains an underlying challenge to the health of many people around the world. Thomas Willemsen, Senior Vice President, Takeda Asia Pacific shared further insights on APAC scenarios towards accelerating healthcare innovation in a post-pandemic era.

- **What are the challenges and opportunities surrounding healthcare accessibility, especially among low- and middle-income countries?**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines universal health coverage as people having access to health services they need, when and where they need them, without being financially burdened. An important aspect of universal health coverage

is access to medicines. It is estimated that one in three people in developing countries are not able to receive essential medicines on a regular basis and up to 90% of those in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) are required to pay for their medicines out-of-pocket.

While affordability is constantly highlighted as the main barrier to access, patients face challenges that go beyond payments. Patients' pathways vary by healthcare systems, disease areas, and context, with multiple entries and exit points. Some of the main factors that hinder patient access to healthcare include geographic hurdles, substandard healthcare infrastructures that limit reliable diagnoses, and precise medical knowledge which is, by and large, restricted to a handful of specialists.

For patients with rare diseases, diagnosis often requires 8 separate visits to a variety of physicians. Even then, patients and caregivers may be faced with misdiagnoses, which usually occur 3 times during the entire process. This is largely due to a lack of treatment funding and low generation of scientific medical data, which can be witnessed in countries such as Vietnam or Indonesia.

Travel restrictions amidst COVID-19 have further exacerbated the challenges patients face. Despite the improvements in clinical innovations, medicine deliveries, and care, access remains an underlying challenge to the underserved communities in LMICs. At Takeda, we believe that access to healthcare, medicines, and vaccines should be universal, and as a biopharmaceutical leader, we are committed to translating science into highly-innovative medicines for complex and rare diseases to make a difference in people's lives.

Asia Pacific (APAC) sits within our Growth and Emerging Markets Business Unit (GEM BU), which presents significant opportunities for us to support unmet patient needs across key therapy areas, ensuring access to our innovative medicines, as well as other supportive healthcare services through Takeda-sponsored and supported clinical trials or medical scientific education events.

We are committed to bringing innovative medicines from across our chosen therapeutic areas of focus, namely Oncology, Rare Diseases, Plasma-Derived Therapies, Gastroenterology, and Neuroscience, and hopefully soon, Vaccines to patients in the region.

Taking our commitment a step further, Patient Assistance Programmes (PAPs) are a cornerstone of our Access to Medicines strategy. As PAPs use innovative and collaborative financing models to increase patients' access to treatment while maximising medical benefits, Takeda is providing sustainable innovative, and life-saving solutions to addressing accessibility barriers.

Since Takeda established these Patient Assistance Programmes and Market Access Schemes, until December 2021, we have impacted the lives of additional 930 patients through our 32 initiatives across APAC.

- **What are some learnings from the pandemic? What does this mean for healthcare innovation in 2022 and beyond?**

COVID-19 taught us that there is a need for the world to have a higher awareness of the dangers of infectious diseases and to be better prepared should an outbreak of such scale happen again. On the biopharmaceutical front, the pandemic showed us that through clinical data sharing, we can accelerate the speed of introducing new innovative treatments to meet unmet needs, such as the global mobilised action to deliver a vaccine for COVID-19. We are also taking a more cohesive approach with different stakeholders.

Furthermore, Takeda has accelerated the implementation of our digital transformation by partnering with major digital platforms to explore new channels and provide more convenient services to customers and patients, including digital tools for patients to track their symptoms. We also expect to see digital advancements improve home transfusion services, which are currently in place to support patients' adherence to treatment while prioritising their safety.

With innovation at the forefront of global preparedness, in 2022 and beyond, it is important for us to collaborate beyond borders to advance collective efforts while remaining competitive to stimulate and inspire new scientific breakthroughs. Furthermore, there needs to be a strong alliance between multiple stakeholders to encourage and improve access to healthcare, especially amongst underserved communities. At Takeda, we forge strategic partnerships to support with strengthening the local healthcare systems and deliver appropriate local-specific initiatives through our Access to Medicines programme.

Agility and adaptability are also important aspects that should be carried through to the future so that we can circumnavigate any unprecedented situations such as a pandemic, strategically and effectively. Takeda will continue to take focused steps to spearhead digital innovation to drive greater efficiencies in serving patients and our key stakeholders worldwide.

- **How do you summarise Takeda's FY21 contributions and ventures to the APAC healthcare sector?**

Despite the pandemic and economic downturns, with sustainable and long-term business strategies in place, Takeda has delivered strong Q3 FY2021 results with double-digit growth in reported revenue globally, whereby our previous quarter witnessed robust topline growth, especially among our 14 global brands.

As an area, we have our sights set on growing at double the pace of the respective markets in which we operate. We will do this through a tailored strategy per country that sets priorities based on the nuanced healthcare landscape, healthcare needs, and digital readiness – among other factors. We are incredibly proud of our 13 new launches in FY2021 and are preparing for 52 more over the next three years across our 10 countries.

Specifically, our in-country focuses are as follows:

In Australia, Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand, we are spearheading collaborations with payors to drive value-based access solutions and create sustainable long-term value for our patients. This helps manage limited resources by allowing them to pay for medications that meet the desired outcomes. Taking it a step further, we are also looking to enhance outcomes of our specialised treatments by offering patient support services that include home-based care coordination to support adherence to treatment schedules and improve patient quality of life through education and minimisation of disease burden.

In emerging markets such as Philippines, Indonesia or Vietnam, where many communities lack adequate and affordable healthcare, we follow a two-fold strategy. First, we focus on strengthening the healthcare system by improving the diagnosis and treatment of rare and complex diseases through our Access to Medicines strategy. Second, we focus on some of Southeast Asia's developing countries in making our anticipated Dengue Vaccine candidate available to protect people against this burdensome disease.

- **How do you foresee market trends/expectations and the potential impact of Takeda's Dengue Vaccine Candidate?**

We expect that our dengue vaccine candidate, if approved, could have a significant effect on disease prevention, along with vector control. One of the key important findings in our pivotal Phase 3 study is that over the course of three years, our dengue vaccine candidate showed continued protection against dengue illness and significantly reduced the rates of hospitalization. This is critical when we consider that during an outbreak, countries can see a spike in hospitalizations. This can create a significant strain on healthcare resources, but also an economic burden for the patients.

We are committed to working with regulatory authorities and recommending bodies to seek an approval and access pathway, including the private market and inclusion in public national immunization programs.

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