

**Proposal: Recommendations on Transparency of ODA  
Contributions and the Evaluation of National Interest**

Proposal

**NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children**

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## Background

NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children operates under the vision of "For every child, a healthy future". We have consistently communicated the importance and significance of ODA (official development assistance) contributions to international public-private partnership organizations such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Global Fund. Specifically, we have advocated that continued contributions to Gavi's next strategic period will contribute to solving global health challenges.

Through our advocacy activities to date, we believe that while the importance and significance of ODA are being communicated to the public, there is a lack of discussion and public explanation regarding its funding sources and sustainability.

In particular, while Japan has been providing financial support to Gavi, our organization finds it difficult to logically explain the financial sources of this support to the public and foster their understanding because there are not enough documents available to the public. Furthermore, while there are cases where contributions to Gavi have led to the promotion of Japanese corporate technology and the expansion of new business, we face the challenge of not adequately communicating these successes to the public.

ODA contributions are funded by public taxes. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the budget while seeking public consensus on its priority as a use of tax revenue. Political and administrative bodies are forced to make choices in the face of mounting challenges, making policy prioritization and budget allocation even more difficult.

## Analysis of the Problem

At the opening ceremony of TICAD9 in August this year, a major pledge was announced by Prime Minister Ishiba to contribute up to 81.0 billion JPY (5.5 million USD) to Gavi over the next five years.

In response, voices emerged on social media stating that with social issues in Japan diversifying and becoming more complex, that there was no time for ODA, and the government should address the immediate domestic problems first.

This indicates that explanations to gain public understanding have not kept pace with Japan's large-scale contribution. Underlying this is the issue of insufficient explanation regarding the basis for calculating the ODA contribution amount and its justification.

Our organization believes there are specifically "two structural issues": a lack of explanation at the stages "before" and "after" the contribution.

### Issue 1: Lack of transparency in the basis for calculating contributions

The objective basis for calculating the contribution amount is not presented to the public, and we believe discussions reflecting the fiscal situation and public understanding are lacking.

Furthermore, it is presumed that discussions on the contribution amount to Gavi's plan take place in meetings between officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), ministers, and Gavi's resource mobilization staff. However, the process of these discussions is not clarified within the scope of available documents.

Because this discussion process is not generally public, the public feels that decisions are being made without sufficient discussion in the National Diet.

Even with the announcement of the approximately 81.0 billion JPY contribution to Gavi this August, explanations to the public were insufficient, and many questions were raised. At a press conference by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, the inadequacy of the calculation basis was pointed out, but even then, there was no clear answer from the Minister<sup>2</sup>.

## **Issue 2: Insufficient explanation of outcomes that benefit the national interest**

MOFA currently evaluates financial contributions to international organizations based on the following four criteria:

1. Contribution to Japan's diplomatic policy goals.
2. Performance of the recipient organization's activities.
3. Organizational, financial, and administrative management of the recipient.
4. Status of Japanese staff and posts.

In MOFA's "Evaluation of Contributions to International Organizations for FY2025 (Reiwa 7)<sup>3</sup>," we believe the descriptions for Gavi under evaluation criteria 1-4 do not sufficiently explain the specific outcomes benefiting Japan's national interest, particularly failing in quantitative evaluation.

Evaluation criteria 1–4 are intended to describe "The involvement of Japanese stakeholders beyond the government (companies including procurement contractors, NGOs and NPOs, local governments, universities, and individuals, etc) in the recipient's activities, and the usefulness/importance of this contribution to said stakeholders. The utilization status of the contribution to benefit Japanese stakeholders, such as securing procurement for Japanese companies."

For example, the evaluation criteria 1-4 for Gavi in the "Evaluation of Contributions to International Organizations for FY2025" states: "In June 2021, Toyota Tsusho Corporation donated 100 million JPY to Gavi through the COVAX AMC and signed a basic agreement with Gavi to provide 5 vehicles equipped with WHO Prequalified (PQ) vaccine refrigerators free of charge. Subsequently, as part of delivery support, 52 vehicles have been supplied through Gavi to date, including to Ghana, which expressed an interest in purchasing them."

While this case is an excellent achievement, we believe that the current report does not allow the public to fully assess the benefits this contribution brought to the Japanese company. For example, there is no description of the process whereby Toyota Tsusho, through its donation and free provision, demonstrated that its high-performance

refrigerator-equipped vehicles brought clear results, such as improving vaccine transport efficiency, which in turn led to high praise from recipient governments and international organizations and resulted in additional orders. Nor is there any mention of the monetary value of the 52-vehicle order.

To promote public understanding, a report is needed that captures both this kind of **story and its impact**.

## Recommendations

### 1. Visualize the Basis for Contribution Calculations and Performance Evaluation

Introduce an objective and highly transparent evaluation process as a foundation for building national consensus on the validity of contributions.

- **Creation and disclosure of a "Pre-Contribution Assessment Report"**  
(Short-term goal)

When making contributions to Gavi and other organizations, MOFA shall prepare and disclose a "Pre-Contribution Assessment Report" beforehand, clarifying the basis for the amount calculation and the expected outcomes.

- **Basis for Calculation:** Clearly state the following four elements based on objective data:
    1. International request amount (Gavi's replenishment target and Japan's estimated share).
    2. International comparison with expected contributions from other donor countries.
    3. Performance indicators from past Japanese contributions (based on the quantitative evaluation described later).
    4. Balance with Japan's overall fiscal expenditures (positioning within the total national budget).
  - **Balance between Transparency and Diplomatic Flexibility:** This report shall, in principle, be made public to ensure accountability. However, consideration must also be given to ensure that prior disclosure does not excessively restrict diplomatic flexibility in international negotiations. Nonetheless, it should be recognized that increasing transparency in these four elements actually has positive aspects, such as enhancing the credibility of Japan's commitment and encouraging contributions from other countries.
  - **Phased Implementation:** We recommend piloting this system, first using the Gavi contribution as a model case, and after verifying its effectiveness, expanding it to the evaluation of contributions to other international organizations.
- **Development of strategic public relations to promote public understanding**  
(Mid- to Long-term goal)

Fundamentally review the public relations strategy to promote public understanding of the validity of the contribution calculation basis and to gain understanding and acceptance of ODA.

- **Specification and Diversification of PR Methods:** In addition to disclosing information on government project review websites, create and disseminate a portal site (tentatively named) "Global Health Japan—Visualizing Contributions" that explains the content of the Pre-Contribution Assessment Report in an easy-to-understand manner. Also, actively utilize methods suitable for the digital age. Specifically, strengthen outreach through social media and video content.
- **Avoiding Exaggeration Risk and Ensuring Credibility:** In public relations, strictly avoid the risk of exaggerating results. When presenting achievements such as "Japan's contribution saved XX million lives," always specify the basis for that calculation (e.g., Gavi's official reports, peer-reviewed papers) and ensure communication is calm, objective, and balanced. Recognize that excessive emphasis can be counterproductive and lead to a loss of trust if it deviates from reality.
- **Measuring PR Effectiveness (Setting KPIs):** To verify the effectiveness of public relations, set specific benchmarks (e.g., "Increase public ODA awareness by X% within 3 years," "Improve ODA support rate among youth by Y%"), conduct regular effectiveness measurements, and run a PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.

## 2. Strategically Clarify and Fairly Quantify the Spillover Effects on National Interest

Clarify that ODA contributions are not just "handouts" but also strategically contribute to Japan's national interest (technology, human resources, corporate activities) to expand the support base.

- **Introduction of a "Japan Stakeholder Spillover Effect Evaluation" and balanced reporting (Short-term goal)**
  - Introduce a "Japan Stakeholder Spillover Effect Evaluation" and organize it as an annual report to grasp how support through Gavi contributes to Japanese technology, human resources, and corporate activities.
  - **Balancing National Interest and International Contribution (Win-Win Context):** When conducting this evaluation, the primary objective of ODA—contributing to the development of the recipient country—must come first. On that basis, the spillover effects on national interest should be positioned within a context where Japan's superior technology and knowledge contribute to solving local challenges (e.g., lives saved, health system strengthening) and create synergies (a "Win-Win"). Meticulous care must be taken to avoid misunderstandings or international criticism of "aid for self-interest" by also introducing specific improvements on the recipient country's side and feedback from the local level, rather than just reporting on the achievements of Japanese companies.

- **Setting Objective and Verifiable Indicators (KPIs):** The measurement of spillover effects must be based on the design of objective and verifiable indicators, eliminating arbitrariness. Set multifaceted KPIs beyond just contract amounts (monetary value), such as the number of technology transfers, local job creation, local human resource development achievements, and the number of Japanese technologies or products adopted as international standards.
- **Phased Approach:** Clarify the criteria for the scope of measurement (whether to include only direct contracts or also indirect effects and future prospects). Initially, limit it to verifiable direct effects (e.g., contract amounts, number of technology transfers) to ensure objectivity, and gradually consider refining the scope of measurement.
- **Establishment of a systematic information gathering mechanism through public-private partnership (Mid- to Long-term goal)**
  - Recognize the realistic barrier that contract amounts and technical achievements are often confidential information for private companies, and establish a mechanism for information gathering.
  - **Building Public-Private Trust:** Recognize that data collection is premised on building trust between the public and private sectors. The government should not unilaterally demand information but rather present the merits of information sharing to the corporate side (e.g., dissemination as a best practice, creation of new collaboration opportunities).
  - **Specific Collection System by the government :** Consider measures to systematize and streamline data collection, such as establishing regular public-private hearing forums (e.g., consortiums for specific global health issues) and building a dedicated information-sharing platform that ensures confidentiality.

### 3. Drastic Strengthening of Contribution Governance

Strengthen internal controls over the contribution process and strategically fulfill accountability to the public.

- **Requesting the Gavi Secretariat to prepare a performance report on Japanese contributions (Short-term goal)**
  - Request the Gavi Secretariat to prepare an annual "Performance Report on Japanese Contributions" detailing the use of funds, outcomes, and the participation record of related Japanese companies.
  - **Realistic Negotiation Strategy:** Approach negotiations anticipating that Gavi may be concerned about the additional reporting burden. While conveying the importance of Japan's continued contributions, appeal with the logic that "improving transparency is mutually beneficial (especially for securing domestic support in Japan)." As concrete measures, propose customizing existing reporting frameworks for Japan or, if necessary, offer Japanese technical assistance for report preparation (e.g., support in extracting Japan-related data) to build consensus. Also, consider coordinating with other

major donors to approach Gavi with a request for improved reporting from multiple countries.

- **Post-hoc performance review by an independent third-party committee (Mid-term goal)**
  - After contributions are made, establish an "(Tentative Name) International Health Contribution Third-Party Committee" to independently and quantitatively verify the effects of Japan's cooperation based on the performance data reported by Gavi, conducting an annual performance review.
  - **Ensuring Independence and Expertise:** To prevent the committee from becoming a mere formality, introduce mechanisms to ensure its independence and expertise. Committee members should have a balanced composition, including not only global health experts but also public finance scholars, international political scientists, corporate representatives, and civil society representatives. Furthermore, make the committee member selection process, terms of office, and conflict-of-interest prevention measures transparent to eliminate the risk of the evaluation ending as a formality.
  - **Specification of Performance Indicators and Quantitative Evaluation:** Specify performance indicators from past Japanese contributions and establish a methodology for their quantitative evaluation. Introduce more sophisticated evaluation methods, not just improvements in vaccination rates, but also estimates of the reduction effect on the disease burden (DALYs: Disability-Adjusted Life Years) and the economic effects through medical cost reduction and improved labor productivity.
- **Establishment of the "(Tentative Name) International Contribution Evaluation Conference" and ensuring its effectiveness (Mid- to Long-term goal)**

To ensure transparency in Diet deliberations and strategic budget allocation, establish an "(Tentative Name) International Contribution Evaluation Conference" to conduct advance screening of contributions by performing cross-ministerial cost-benefit analysis and diplomatic consistency evaluation at the budget stage.

- **Addressing the Risk of Formalization (Ensuring Effectiveness):** To avoid the risk of formalization due to ministerial sectionalism, introduce a mechanism to promote top-down inter-ministerial coordination, such as having the Cabinet Secretariat lead the conference, with the Chief Cabinet Secretary or Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary serving as chair. Required members would include the MOFA, the Ministry of Finance, and the Cabinet Office (for general coordination). Depending on the case, such as global health (Gavi, etc.), relevant ministries like the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry would participate to conduct objective and strategic screening.
- **Ensuring Sustainability (Institutional Backing):** To prevent the system from becoming a formality due to changes in administration or personnel, clearly state the establishment and operational policy of the evaluation conference in a Cabinet decision. Furthermore, provide institutional backing,

such as by incorporating the conference's evaluation as a mandatory step in the budget formulation process (during budget requests). Additionally, enhance sustainability by publishing the evaluation conference's own activity records annually, placing it under the scrutiny of the Diet and civil society.

## Conclusion

These recommendations represent a realistic approach to institutionally guarantee the transparency of contributions and the explanation of national interest, without compromising the continuity of foreign policy.

This will enable the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote effective and accountable international contributions while gaining public understanding, even amidst severe fiscal constraints.

## References

1. [Ministry of Finance \(April 2025, Reiwa 7\). Documents Related to Japan's Finances.](#)
2. [Press Conference Summary. Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare Fukuoka \(August 29, 2025\).](#)
3. [Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FY2025 \(Reiwa 7\) Evaluation of Contributions to International Organizations.](#)
4. [Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Key Points of Evaluation and Assessment Criteria.](#)
5. [Government Project Review Visualization Site \("Mieruka" Site\).](#)