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Held at Hiroshima RERF: 24th Meeting of the Hiroshima Local Liaison Council

The 24th meeting of the Hiroshima Local Liaison Council (LLC) was held on December 3, 2020. The LLC is a body in which representatives of various sectors of society—local universities, medical institutions, A-bomb survivor organizations, academia, and local governments—participate to ensure local needs are reflected in RERF’s operations. The council met for the first time in two years, since the last meeting in December 2018. Given the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, a video-conferencing system was used to connect the participants.

The council, with 14 members in attendance, engaged in discussions on the following items:

1. Report on present status
2. Stakeholder Committee on Usage of RERF’s Stored Biosamples
3. Future and strategic plans
4. Other reports

Related to item 1. Report on present status, RERF described meetings of the Board of Directors (RERF’s highest decision-making body) and the Scientific Advisory Committee (group of Japanese and American experts that assesses RERF’s research plans and makes recommendations for improvement or change), bodies that met in the interim since the last Hiroshima LLC meeting. Also reported were impacts from COVID-19 on RERF and the foundation’s countermeasures taken against the pandemic, followed by noteworthy areas of RERF research.

Next, for 2. Stakeholder Committee on Usage of RERF’s Stored Biosamples, RERF reported on the outline and progress of the committee, as well as the need for the committee with respect to RERF’s policy about fair use of biosamples, such as blood and urine, provided by study participants in medical examinations. The committee represents an opportunity for RERF to listen to opinions from independent, outside parties with no direct interest in RERF’s operations. RERF also explained to the LLC members about the seven items of advice recently received from the stakeholder committee.

* Please refer to the news piece on the RERF homepage titled [“RERF receives advice from the ‘Stakeholder Committee on Usage of RERF’s Stored Biosamples”](#) for details about the seven items of advice.

As for item 3. Future and strategic plans, RERF explained how, in addition to continuing the epidemiological and clinical research conducted since the days of ABCC, it will work on elucidating molecular mechanisms of disease using biosamples (molecular processes put in motion by radiation exposure that underly the onset of such diseases as cancer). RERF explained how such a change in focus would lead to research that could predict not only risk in groups of people but also risk in individuals. Moreover, with respect to research on health risks for A-bomb survivors, it was emphasized that humanitarian considerations also need to be incorporated into RERF’s science. For RERF to make progress on the work described above, it was explained, advanced technologies, funding, and collaborative research would all be essential.

Lastly, given the needs described above, RERF reported that the Kasumi Campus of Hiroshima University had been newly added as a candidate site for RERF’s relocation and explained the background behind how the campus came to be considered as a potential site for its facilities, alongside Hiroshima City’s General Health Center.

In the period set aside for questions, one committee member asked RERF to reconfirm how the proposal to relocate to the Kasumi Campus of Hiroshima University had emerged, with RERF repeating its explanation of the background behind the issue. Later, another member requested that RERF work to ensure A-bomb survivors benefit further from its research and become an organization open to, and welcoming of, the public. Finally, in response to a question about what organizations were expected to cooperate in its joint research program in the future, RERF explained the current situation regarding its collaborative research.

After the meeting, RERF held a press conference using the video-conferencing system. Twelve reporters from 10 media concerns participated in the press conference.

