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Press release

On the occasion of Prime Minister Valls' visit and the launch of the France-Japan Year of Innovation, Inserm signs a research partnership with St Luke's International University to combat Ebola virus.

In the presence of French Prime Minister Manuel Valls and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, Finance Minister Emmanuel Macron and Secretary of State for Research Thierry Mandon, Inserm and St Luke's International University have just signed a research agreement on combating Ebola virus.

This agreement concerns the development of the antiviral drug Favipiravir for the treatment of Ebola infection. This antiviral drug, initially developed by Toyama Chemical, part of the Fujifilm Group, was evaluated by Inserm under a partnership agreement with the Japanese company and the Guinean authorities during the recent Ebola epidemic in Guinea. The promising results led the Guinean authorities to allow access of Ebola patients to this treatment.

In order to continue research on this drug with a view to developing a treatment, Inserm and St Luke's International University, designated as operator by the relevant Japanese authorities, have concluded an agreement focusing mainly on preclinical research. The total sum allocated under this collaboration is approximately €1 million for the Japanese part, to fund research conducted by Inserm, particularly in its Inserm/Jean Mérieux high-level containment laboratory in Lyon.

Following joint statements from the French and Japanese Prime Ministers, Prof. Yves Lévy, Chairman and CEO of Inserm, and Prof. Tsuguya Fukui, President of St Luke's International University, welcomed this French-Japanese collaboration.

Prof. Lévy stated: *"The agreement that has just been signed will allow Inserm to make further advances in combating Ebola by establishing the optimal dose of Favipiravir for broad protection of populations threatened by the virus. This is a vital contribution to the excellent research on Ebola conducted in Inserm's laboratories."*

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