

# Nation plays bigger role in global health

From exporting low-cost, effective vaccines to sending doctors to combat outbreaks of disease, China is increasingly benefiting the world with its enhanced medical capacities and expertise, according to an international health expert.

Seth Berkley, CEO of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, said Chinese vaccines are “significantly cheaper” than those made by many other countries.

The Chinese-made vaccine for Japanese encephalitis, for example, is up to 95 percent less expensive than those produced in the West, he said.

Transmitted by mosquitoes, Japanese encephalitis is the leading cause of viral encephalitis in Asia and the Western Pacific.

With an average price of 42 cents a dose, the live attenuated vaccine made by the Chengdu Institute of Biological Products is providing lifesaving protection to millions of children in low-income countries, including Laos, Nepal and Cambodia, under the alliance’s program, Berkley said.

The alliance has committed to using 27.7 million doses of the vaccine. In light of this, Berkley hailed China’s efforts to move on from being an alliance recipient of vaccines to being a key supplier.

The nation’s Japanese encephalitis vaccine became available on the global market after the World Health Organization endorsed China’s vaccine regulatory body in 2011. Two years later, the product became the first prequalified Chinese vaccine to be licensed for use on children.

“We’re seeing huge potential for China to supply the global public vaccine market via WHO prequalification, including for emergency outbreaks such as yellow fever and Ebola,” Margaret Chan, director-general of the WHO, said last month.

During the Ebola outbreaks, China sent 1,200 medical workers to affected regions. Chinese experts also trained more than 13,000 local medics to treat patients in nine countries in Africa.