

Statement by H. E. Hisao HARIHARA  
Vice-Minister for International Affairs  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
Government of Japan  
At the Second International Conference on Nutrition  
20 November 2014, Rome

Mr. Chairman (Madam Chair),  
Excellencies,  
Director-Generals of FAO and WHO,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

## **1. Introduction**

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Director-General of FAO, Dr. José Graziano da Silva, and the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Margaret Chan, for organizing this important meeting.

## **2. Two Aspects of Nutrition Issue**

Ladies and gentlemen,

There are two aspects to the international issue of nutrition. The first one is the overnutrition often observed in many developed as well as developing countries. This has increased medical costs and strained public expenditures. The other one is undernutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies, mostly found in developing countries. There are still more than 8 hundred million people suffering from inadequate energy and nutrient intake.

## **3. Japan's Contribution**

To address both challenges, Japan can make a contribution through technological methods which are deeply rooted in our culture.

### **(1) Tackling Overnutrition Issue**

In tackling the overnutrition issue, we can find a clue for its solution in the Japanese dietary culture. The distinctive feature of Japanese cuisine is the use of *dashi* cooking broth, fermented foods and various natural ingredients, which has developed in close relation to our traditional events.

Cooking broth, especially known as *dashi*, is very unique in making foods more delicious without using fat, since *dashi* contains glutamic acid and inosinic acid. This specific feature of *dashi* has contributed to establishing a balanced and low-calorie culinary culture. Consequently, Japanese cuisine, designated as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO, can provide tasty dishes, while also addressing issues like obesity and nutritional balance.

Recognizing the positive health effect of Japanese cuisine, Japan has been implementing a policy to promote the health status of the Japanese people by promoting the linkages between the medical care, welfare and food sectors.

Moreover, Japan has developed policies and programs for ensuring healthy life-course dietary patterns. For example, an inter-ministry program has been implemented to enhance the knowledge and practice of healthy diets under the Basic Law on Shokuiku, namely the law for food and nutrition education. The ministries in charge of health, agriculture, and education are cooperating in this program.

### **(2) Tackling Undernutrition issue**

For the undernutrition issue in developing countries, Japan has implemented many agricultural assistance projects which have achieved increased productivity and higher living standards for farmers. Japan has also conducted maternal and child healthcare programs and nutrition education.

Furthermore, Japanese food manufacturing companies have recently been active in addressing nutritional issues by making use of their advanced technologies. For example, Ajinomoto, a world famous company which has long-term experience in amino acid research and production has developed “KOKO Plus”, a nutritional supplement for children in Africa. “KOKO Plus” is expected to improve the nutritional status of infants and children in Ghana. Likewise, other Japanese food companies have initiated attempts to produce nutrient-rich foods in India and Kenya, taking advantage of their excellent food processing technologies. These efforts have been encouraged by Japanese Official Development Assistance.

In the years to come, Japan will address global food security and nutritional issues by expanding production of foods and agricultural products through establishment of food value chains with public and private collaboration.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Malnutrition poses enormous social and economic burdens on our society and has negative impacts even on the next generation. Therefore, efforts to tackle this issue should be a political priority in each country. Japan is committed to continuously and proactively contributing to solving the nutritional issue in collaboration with FAO and WHO.

Thank you for your attention.