

(Statement)

Address by H.E. Yoshimasa HAYASHI
Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Government of Japan
At the Ministerial Meeting on International Food Prices
7 October 2013
FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

Mr. Chairpersons,
Dr. José Graziano da Silva,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates and participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

(Introduction)

1. We all know that food and nutrition are the most essential for our health and lives.

However, still one in eight suffers from chronic hunger.

Japan is keen to securing global food security and agricultural development in a sustainable manner.

At the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, TICADV, we established the goal of empowering farmers as mainstream economic actors.

(Addressing World Food Security)

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Although there has not been acute price hikes this year, food prices still remain above the historical averages.

In the medium to long term, the world's food demand is projected to increase steadily.

Agricultural production and productivity should be increased in a sustainable manner to respond to this growing demand, considering the diversity of worldwide environmental conditions and the multiple functions of agriculture.

In addition, production increase must be accompanied by the co-existence of various types of agriculture in the world, since this can mitigate the impact from poor harvest of certain crops on the international market.

2. At the same time, we cannot overlook the large amount of global food losses and waste.

Developed countries including Japan should minimize food waste in their own market. An effective food value chain should be established, particularly in developing countries, to ensure smooth and efficient food distribution and to reduce food losses. Japan would like to contribute to establishing such a food value chain in the developing countries.

(Responsible Agricultural Investment)

3. Investment in all stages of agricultural value chain should be conducted to harmonize the benefits of all stakeholders, including local communities and small farmers, in order to avoid unilateral development by investors.

Thus, Japan has promoted the concept of “responsible agricultural investment” and will continue our contribution to the discussion on this agenda at the CFS.

(Refraining for Export Restrictions)

4. Arbitrary policy interventions, such as export restrictions, could cause soaring food prices.

Therefore, countries should refrain from such interventions and make efforts to stabilize international food prices.

(Market Transparency)

5. To prevent excessive price volatility, sharing accurate and timely market information is important.

We expect that the Agricultural Market Information system, AMIS, will play a vital role for that purpose.

(Japanese Agricultural Policy)

6. Lastly, I would like to introduce recent development in Japan’s agricultural policies.

Facing a shrinking and aging farmers population and increasing abandoned farmlands, we have outlined a new strategy titled “Aggressive Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.”

Under this new policy, we aim to convert agriculture, forestry and fisheries into a new growing industry, while at the same time, enhancing the multifunctionality of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

(Conclusion)

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Japan will continue its efforts to contribute to improving global food security, in collaboration with other countries, international organizations, including FAO, and the international community.

Thank you for your attention.