



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

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The Launching Meeting on SDGs, Population and Food Security

As proclaimed at the World Food Summit in 1996, all people have the right to food security, and freeing all people from hunger is essential for sustainable development. Food security is also one of key challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda), including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which was adopted last year at the United Nations. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), however, at least 795 million people, out of the world population of about 7 billion today, remain undernourished.¹ Considering that the world population is expected to surpass 9 billion in 2050, mainly from continuing population increases in developing countries in Asia and Africa, the issue of food security will become even more crucial.

The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), which serves as the secretariat for Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPPF), believes that addressing the population issue and establishing food security forms the cornerstone of sustainable development and growth. To broadly stimulate interest in this pressing issue of food security, APDA hosted a conference in Tokyo on October 24, with the support of Syngenta, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan.



At the opening ceremony, H.E. Yasuo Fukuda, Chair of APDA and former Prime Minister of Japan, welcomed the participants. In his keynote speech, he pointed out that challenges facing food security can be broadly divided into issues related to the global environment's capacity to support life, including limitations in freshwater resources, and issues of distribution exemplified by widening social inequality. As for food security in Japan, he advised stepping out of the common perception of seeing food security within the supply-demand relation and reframing it within the context of the government's policies of "dynamic engagement of all citizens" and "regional revitalization," which would give new and greater importance to "local production of food for local consumption".

Taking into account the outcomes of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI), Hon. Asahiko Mihara, Member of the House of Representatives; Director of JPPF; and Chair of JPPF Food Security Committee,



¹ The State of Food Insecurity in the World. FAO, 2015.

reported that owing to efforts made in food security, food security per se was no longer the top priority issue even in Africa. He informed that the focus was now shifting towards nutrition and other quality aspects of food security, and highlighted the need for public-private partnership in sustainable development.

In the keynote session, Dr. Mbuli Charles Boliko, Director of FAO Liaison Office in Japan, stated that according to FAO's data, food security was now achievable and that "if we start taking action today, we could become the zero-hunger generation". Representing the Japanese government, Mr. Koichi Aiboshi, Director-General for Global Issues (Ambassador) of MOFA, explained that the Japanese government was now drawing up its policies on the SDGs and that the food security issue was an important area in which Japan could leverage its experience towards international



cooperation. He noted that the international community has set nutrition improvement targets to be achieved by 2020 and that the issue of food security and nutrition will be highlighted towards the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. Dr. Masayoshi Honma, Professor of the Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences of the University of Tokyo, divided food security into four areas of "food availability, supply, access, and food intake", and said that Japan should achieve food security through international division of labor and by reviewing a portfolio of production, stockpiling, and import, as the situation demands.



In the panel presentation, Mr. Davor Pisk, Chief Operating Officer at Syngenta, spoke about the potential contribution of science-based technology, from the perspective of an agricultural technology company. Mr. Shigeshi Ohnishi, Executive Director of the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, touched on the efforts made by producers, while Dr. Takeshi Kimura, Member of the Board and Corporate Vice-President of Ajinomoto Co., Inc., made a presentation on Ajinomoto's nutrition-improvement project in Ghana using amino-acid complementary food. Mr. Hideyuki Mori, President of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), discussed the limitations of the environment, and Mr. Yuichiro Watanabe, Director of the International Organizations Division, Minister's Secretariat of MAFF, spoke about the importance of reducing loss in the food value chain linking the producers and consumers and about international cooperation in the development of Nerica rice. Lastly, Mr. Hiroto Mitsugi, Director General of Rural Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), gave a presentation on the use of agricultural technology, nutrition, climate change, development, and transfer of Japan's experience.



In the panel discussion moderated by Dr. Honma, proposals were made to increase productivity of farmland, establish value chains, reinforce sales capacity, and maintain and expand the production base of farmers in order to respond to the future increase in demand. On the other hand, the difficulty in meeting infrastructure and other requirements was also pointed out. Dr. Honma emphasized that "Japan should contribute to food security of the world, because Japan cannot achieve its own food security without resolving the issues of malnutrition and poverty in the developing world".



In the Q & A session, Hon. Takashi Kosugi, Director of the International Research Institute for Environmental Policies (IRIEP); former Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; and the former President of GLOBE Japan, called for concrete measures to address the current state where food has the potential to be used as a tool of war. Hon. Wakako Hironaka, Chair of the Earth, Water & Green Foundation; a member of APDA's Board



of Directors; and former State Minister, Director-General of the Environment Agency, asked what were the prospects for development of Japan's agriculture through investment in agricultural technology such as drip irrigation and how that might lead to Japan's contribution to the international community.

It was also remarked that even though the optimistic views of Dr. Honma and FAO on the achievability of food security are commendable, whether one could be optimistic or pessimistic about its achievability was dependent on how one viewed such economic externalities as the environment and limited water resources.



Mr. Mori, President of IGES, proposed including the phrase "such as climate change" after "environmental issues" in the meeting's recommendations. The recommendations were then adopted by consensus of all participants.

At the conclusion, Hon. Chiaki Takahashi, former State Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chair of Japan Agricultural Products Exporters Association, who served as the master of ceremonies, thanked all concerned for their cooperation and all participants for their active discussions. He expressed hope that the discussions would be further deepened in the future through involvement of more parliamentarians as well as the public. At the reception that followed the conference, participants deepened their friendship and exchanged opinions in a cordial atmosphere, building momentum for the next meeting as this kickoff meeting came to a successful close.