

Statement on the State of Food and Agriculture by  
**Mr Hisao Harihara, Vice-Minister for International Affairs,**  
**the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan**  
39th FAO Conference, 9 June 2015, Rome

“Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty and Hunger by Strengthening Rural Resilience:  
Social Protection and Sustainable Agricultural Development”

1. Chairperson,  
Dr. José Graziano da Silva, the Director-General of FAO,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates and participants,

I am truly honoured to have this opportunity to express our reviews on the State of Food and Agriculture on behalf of the Government of Japan.

2. The key theme of this general debate is “strengthening rural resilience.” To what kinds of shocks and changes agriculture and farmers are vulnerable and how we should strengthen their resilience? Let’s think them together.
3. Firstly, think about natural disasters and rapid climate change. My country frequently suffers natural disasters like typhoons, landslides and earthquakes. Japan has been strengthening its resilience by learning from the past experiences of repeated disasters.
4. For instance, for risk reduction, we try to develop accurate and timely weather forecasting systems, durable irrigation systems and agricultural insurance, and make every effort toward forest conservation. We also endeavour to transfer our knowledge and technologies to other countries in this field.
5. Secondly, think about food price volatility. Market transparency is a key to addressing this issue. Well-structured, accurate and timely information must be widely shared among stakeholders, from producers, processors, and distributors to consumers. Japan will continue its collaboration for the AMIS activities.
6. Thirdly, think about rural poverty. Lack of efficient food systems connecting farmers to consumers, and farmers’ inability to fully participate in markets could be major causes of poverty. Japan will support food value chain development in Asia and Africa through FAO and promote the integration of farmers into food value chains to increase their earnings.

7. Fourthly, think about gaps between rural areas and urban areas. Rural-urban exchange can contribute to reducing the gaps through better understanding of rural values. In this connection, we support FAO's activities on GIAHS, which re-evaluates long-standing agricultural systems and creates economic opportunities for rural people, such as agritourism.
8. Also, investments play a critical role in uplifting agriculture and rural livelihoods. We support concerted efforts for the implementation of the principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems in this regard.
9. Last but not least, think about the trans-boundary pests and diseases of plants and animals. International collaboration for prevention and control are fundamental to cope with such threats at the global level. Japan will continue to support relevant FAO activities through the contribution of expertise.
10. In conclusion, we will continue our efforts to strengthen rural resilience in our country, as well as in other parts of the world in collaboration with other countries and relevant partners like FAO.
11. Chairperson, Excellencies, and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, let me inform you that from 10:30 tomorrow, we will co-host a side event with FAO and the African Group on agricultural development in Africa, especially on how to develop inclusive and efficient food value chains. The topic is highly relevant to the theme of this general debate, and we very much look forward to welcoming you all at the event.

Thank you.