

Remarks by the Representative of Delegation of Japan
Thematic Discussions on Rural Development and Agriculture
Commission on Sustainable Development

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Allow me to make some comments regarding rural development and response to recent trends.

(One-Village One Product Campaign)

When it comes to promotion of trade for rural economies of developing countries, improvement of market access is not the end of the story. The most challenging part is marketing.

The One Village One Product campaign, mentioned by the representative of Thailand yesterday, began in 1979 in Oita Prefecture, a remote mainly mountainous province of Western Japan. It is one method developed to achieve endogenous economic growth in rural economies. The gist of this campaign is to develop local products attractive and marketable to consumers and to help develop market channels. Typical products are handicrafts, textiles, processed foods, and accessories. This movement has been successfully introduced in many countries in Asia and Africa like Thailand and Malawi.

(Microfinance)

Another important tool for rural development is microfinance. Microfinance plays an important role in the promotion of human security, the

achievement of gender equality and the alleviation of poverty. With this in mind, Japan has provided funds for micro credit bilaterally and through multilateral frameworks.

(Food Prices and Trade Liberalization)

Panelists emphasized yesterday the importance of liberalizing agricultural trade as a policy response to soaring food prices. In reality, however, doesn't the ongoing hike in food prices along with export bans lead to domestic pressure to strengthen food security? It is quite natural that consumers, alarmed by news report of food scarcity and social unrest, believe that total reliance of food on importation is too risky and choose to protect domestic agriculture even at a cost of high market price. I appreciate the views of panelists.

(Japan's Emergency Food Assistance)

Finally, in response to soaring food prices, the Government of Japan announced last month that it will contribute 100 million dollars for emergency food assistance for the next three months. 50 million dollars will be disbursed to Africa through WFP in the month of May.

Thank you for your attention.