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**Statement by Ambassador Yukio Takasu
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
At the Special Session of ECOSOC on the Global Food Crisis
20 May 2008**

Mr. President,

The magnitude and the scope of the serious challenge posed by the recent dramatic increase of food prices demand our unified voice and strong collective action. The UN is expected to play a central coordinating role in effective response to this global challenge. Therefore, we commend your initiative in organizing this timely special session of ECOSOC.

(G8, TICAD IV)

Prime Minister Fukuda, in his capacity as the Chair of the G8, conveyed a few weeks ago to the UN Secretary-General and the president of the World Bank his intention to take measures to deal with serious impacts of the global food prices as a priority issue at the G8 Toyako Summit in early July. And he requested them to provide input from the United Nations system. In the forthcoming Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, or TICAD IV, in Yokohama next week we will also develop measures for strengthening agricultural production in African countries to address the current crisis.

(Response of the UN System)

It is therefore gratifying that the Secretary-General, together with the President of the World Bank and head of other international organizations, took initiative to establish the High-Level Taskforce on the Global Food Crisis, and tasked it to develop a comprehensive plan of action covering the short, medium and long-term counter-measures for consideration at the High Level Conference on the World Food Security in Rome in early

June. We place high expectations on the Rome Conference, which we hope will come up with a firm political commitment to tackle this serious challenge and with a road map with a clear set of guidelines and timelines for international actions. One can hardly overemphasize the importance of well-coordinated and structured response of the UN system organizations (UN, FAO, WFP, IFAD, etc.) as well as international financial institutions (WB, IMF, ADB, AFDB, etc). We very much look forward to the completion of the comprehensive action plan, which will serve as the basis for international collective action.

(Human Security Approach)

Mr. President,

Dramatic increase in food price threatens the most vulnerable people and communities in dire poverty and hunger. Disaster of poverty, hunger and unemployment in the wake of escalating food prices has triggered social and economic unrest in many parts of developing countries. Our approach to the issue must always involve a human security approach; a human centered approach to promote individuals' sense of security and access to basic human needs.

(Immediate Response)

Our immediate response should focus on providing emergency food aid to people at countries in need through multilateral and bilateral channels. Japan has recently decided to contribute US \$100 million for emergency food aid for three months, \$50 million of which will be distributed mainly through the World Food Program this month. It is important for traditional food exporting countries to refrain from instituting such trade actions as export restrictions which would endanger the supply-demand stability of food commodities. However, action should not be limited to palliative emergency therapy for the current difficulties.

(Medium to Long-term Response)

We should pay equally high attention to the mid- to long-term strategies aiming for each state to establish food security such as through increased domestic food production. For long, agriculture and food production in developing countries have not necessarily

received the high priority they should deserve in terms of budget allocation, financial assistance, related investments, and research and development of technology. We should strengthen technical and financial assistance to improve the production capacities and food stock capacities in developing countries, including Africa. For instance, the upcoming TICAD IV will be an occasion where the international community can discuss promotion of agricultural production and agricultural productivity through measures such as capacity building, and irrigation and other infrastructure development. Within that context, Japan also intends to assist in doubling rice production in Africa in collaboration with other countries and organizations. This initiative includes dissemination of a new high yield breed of rice called NERICA (New Rice for Africa) which is tolerant of dryness and pests in wide areas of African countries. Promotion of biofuel shall be compatible with the need of food security.

Mr. President,

Through such short, medium, and long-term efforts we will be able to achieve food security for all, which is a core and vital element of human security. The momentum for international collective action is high and the political commitment is being made. We should turn the serious challenge into an opportunity for achieving food security for all. Japan is ready to take the lead in tackling this common challenge.

Thank you.