

*as delivered*

Speech at Partnering to Eliminate Malnutrition: From Promise to Impact,  
co-hosted with the Department for International Development  
by Ambassador Koji Tsuruoka  
at Congress Centre, London WC1B  
on Tuesday 5 July 2016

Ladies and gentlemen, Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to host this event, or rather, coming to the meeting that Minister Nick Hurd and I are jointly hosting in London. We are very delighted that the UK and Japan can co-host an important issue of malnutrition and launch the Partnering to Eliminate Malnutrition: From Promise to Impact, which I believe is a very important work that allows us to have a deeper insight into what we are dealing with, and what measures we need to deploy, as Minister Hurd has eloquently elaborated.

Well, I'd first like to take this opportunity, first of all, to officially welcome the launch of the Global Nutrition Report 2016. This is an invaluable piece of work and provides comprehensive information on the current situation of global malnutrition. As Minister Hurd just told us, the issue of malnutrition is not a simple one issue. It is a combination of a number of causes, a number of reasons, and then it requires multifaceted, multilateral approaches on many many aspects and therefore not one government agency can fully address that. It needs full coordination within the government. That is one – so it is a very important issue for coordination.

Second, the stages of malnutrition are not just limited to one period of lifetime. It can go on, and as Minister Hurd has told us, it comes from the first 1000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's 2nd birthday, the school period, adolescence, the perinatal period, maturity and old age, all challenges being qualitatively different. And how do we cope with these difficulties? Now of course, the report will indicate to us what these problems are and how we should approach them, but at the end of the day, whether we can successfully address these really depends on partnership. UK and Japan are partners in this. We deploy our resources, our expertise

and the political will in addressing those difficulties because if people are not enjoying good health, where would the world be? People are capable of producing and living a very successful life if we, the government, and other institutions that are capable of doing so, allow them to fulfil their own destiny on the basis of their will. But, if they are not fed well or wisely then inadvertently, not because of intent but unintentionally, they may not be able to perform what they have been born to do or what they are committed to do, and they are not the ones who are responsible. We are the ones that need to be certain to allow them to fulfil what they can do, and that is why coordination, partnership and joint participation is absolutely necessary.

I am very happy to see many of you gathering in this room because I have no doubt that after today you will go back to your own places to try to promote what you will be learning, and what we will be agreeing to do, over the course of this afternoon. In other words, unless people do deploy each as individuals the capacity to address this issue, that really requires coordination amongst different fields, different sectors and different institutions, there will no success because it will just be talking, talking, talking, so we have to have results and that's now, even demonstrated in the progress of human work that was Millennium Development Goals once and now it is Sustainable Development Goals. I'm not waiting for another 'goals' to be established because goals have to be met and this is why we are here.

Now the other important participant to the issue of malnutrition is the private sector. The private sector ought to be mobilised to address this. In Japan we have a company, an example, just one (not that I've been paid to promote this) Ajinomoto. Ajinomoto is a very famous company – it was started by a scientist by the way – they discovered an ingredient that makes food tastier so it is very popular. But now they have also developed a nutritional supplement called Koko Plus. This can be added to a Ghanaian baby food called Koko. They add this you see – Ajinomoto is good at adding – so they developed this Koko Plus which will be added to the traditional baby food in Ghana, called Koko, which provides necessary nutrition elements to the baby. It has not been done only by us in the public sector – but they have developed that because they have the expertise and they are aware of what is happening on the ground, and they thought that

this will serve the babies well. Such is the force of the private sector – it is not the public sector or NGOs that have the monopoly of working on health issues or nutrition - we should also promote and encourage the private sector to come on board and to work with us.

As for the political initiatives which we, Minister Hurd and I, are responsible, we have been working very hard as also mentioned by Minister Hurd. Most recently Japan hosted the G7 Summit. Prior to the Summit, we also had the G7 Niigata Agriculture Ministers meeting in April, which was then followed by the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in May. Through these meetings, the seven leaders of the G7 endorsed *the Ise-Shima Leaders Declaration, the Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health, the G7 Vision for Action on Food Security and Nutrition, and the G7 Niigata Agriculture Ministers Meeting Declaration*.

All of these declarations are focusing on the issue of improving nutrition. Nutrition in the past has been an issue that has been addressed and then talked about in the corridors of UN meetings or by DFID of course which has been consistently right in the centre of this issue, and perhaps NGOs but not the mainstream - the major leaders' topic. What we have tried to do, and it also started with Mr Cameron's initiative in Loch Erne, where I was assisting Prime Minister Abe because I was his Sherpa, the personal representative of the Prime Minister when my Minister's PM attended the Loch Erne Summit, the nutrition issue has been focused as requiring the attention of the leaders - the G7/G8 leaders. Of course, I'm sure President Putin continues to keep in mind the importance of nutrition, because that is a leaders' issue, and as Minister Hurd has mentioned to you, unless we have the political will these issues that are so diverse cannot really be addressed and that is why we also made the point of raising this with the leaders very consistently. That is why this is a G7 issue, that is why it has been raised by the British government in G8 Loch Erne and it has also been continued to be discussed in Japan this year and we will continue to do so. And this is really necessary because the report tells us that the malnutrition issue is a cross-sectoral policy issue, and in this sense discussing malnutrition from several viewpoints such as food security, health and agriculture by the G7 is valuable and indispensable.

Japan is also co-hosting with the Africans the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which we call TICAD VI, in Nairobi, Kenya this coming August. Of course, the issue of nutrition will be one central topic we will be discussing, and of course our British colleagues are invited to attend and we are looking very much forward again to work in close consultation with our colleagues from the UK to again work with the Africans in addressing their problem of nutrition. Now, the three themes that we are trying to put at this TICAD Meeting: One is “Promoting structural economic transformation through economic diversification and industrialization”. Second is “Promoting resilient health systems for quality of life”. And the third and last is “Promoting social stability for shared prosperity”. Addressing malnutrition has to be integrated in all these three priorities, because it is far reaching and affects all issues related to development and quality of life. We are considering to establish a new initiative for food and nutrition security in Africa, the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa, or in short IFNA. We hope this initiative will accelerate nutritional improvement coordinating several sectors including health, agriculture and education.

So ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to conclude my remarks by emphasising again, on the basis of the long history that we have worked together between the UK and Japan, that we will continue to do so and promoting improved global nutrition through the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, the Global Nutrition for Growth. These were health innovations to the Loch Erne Summit and again at the recent Ise-Shima Summit in Japan. Our two countries have also committed to further strengthening our efforts towards improved nutrition ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. I’d like to finish by expressing my sincere hope that, as part of this Japan-UK cooperation, today’s event will prove to be a successful opportunity for productive debate and further progress. Thank you very much for your attention.