

The 5th Waseda Brussels Conference
“Global Sustainable Food Supply” (13 December 2023)

Opening Words

YAMAMOTO, Yasushi

Ambassador of Japan to the European Union

**Prof. Masahiko GEMMA, Vice President of Waseda University,
Prof. Anne WEYEMBERGH, Vice Rector of Université Libre de
Bruxelles,
Prof. Kazuhiro CHIBA, President of Tokyo University of Agriculture
and Technology,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning,**

[Opening]

**I am Yasushi YAMAMOTO, Ambassador at the Mission of Japan to
the European Union. I am delighted to be invited and have the
opportunity to make my opening remarks here on behalf of the
Government of Japan.**

**Following last year's Waseda Brussels Conference, which was the
first to be held in person in three years after the pandemic, I would
like to express my sincere congratulations on the fact that this year's
conference is again being held in a face-to-face format with a such
large number of participants. I would also like to express my deep
respect to all those who have been involved in the organisation of this
conference from Waseda University and Université Libre de Bruxelles
--- the ULB.**

Today, I would like to take this opportunity to express my views on

three points: 1) appreciation for Waseda University's activities here, including this conference, 2) policy topics on foods between Japan and the EU, concerning today's conference theme, 3) expectations for future collaboration in research and innovation between Japan and the EU.

[1. Appreciation for Waseda University's activities in Brussels]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, Waseda University, with the cooperation of the ULB, has operated the Waseda Brussels Office --- WBO which has been serving as a bridge for education and research between Japan and Europe and has also organised four international conferences. I would like to express my deep respect to Waseda University and WBO for their active promotion of academic exchanges between Japan and the EU.

Now we are facing a historical turning point, and it is becoming more important than ever for Japan and the EU, which share fundamental values, to lead the world, including the global south, in various policy fields. The subject of today's conference, 'Global Sustainable Food Supply', is also a key policy issue, and so we would hope that Waseda University and the ULB will continue to contribute to various exchanges and collaborations between Japan and the EU in the future.

[2. Policy topics on food between Japan and the EU]

(Recent policy topic on food between Japan and the EU)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the second point, I would like to bring to you attention policy topics on food between Japan and the EU.

One of the most encouraging recent events was the EU's decision this August to lift the import restriction measures on Japanese food products that were put in place following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. We welcome the EU's decision to remove the restrictive measures, which was based on scientific evidence. Of course, food safety is a top priority for everyone, and we will remain committed to ensuring transparency and food safety.

In this vein, we hope that people across Europe can happily enjoy a wide range of delicious Japanese foods, knowing that extensive measures are being taken to ensure the safety and quality of the food.

(Commonalities in food, agriculture policy between Japan and the EU)

The compatibility of food production with safeguarding the sustainability of the global environment is also one of the key global challenges. The realisation of sustainable food systems is one of the most important policy agendas for the EU. Japan has also set out its own 'Strategy for Sustainable Food Systems', which aims to realise sustainable agriculture and food systems while reducing environmental burdens.

[3. Future expectation for Japan-EU R&I cooperation]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, as the third point, we understand that today's conference will be a forum for taking stock of our common challenges related to sustainable food systems and discussing the possibilities for future

research and innovation cooperation between Japan and the EU.

We know well that the EU is promoting its Soil Mission to restore unhealthy soils across Europe as one of the mission-oriented research under its research and innovation framework programme. Japan also has been implementing Moonshot Research and Development Program since 2020, one of the goals of which is to create an industry enabling sustainable global food supply without food loss and waste.

In the end, I strongly hope that today's conference will provide an opportunity for researchers, experts and others from Japan and the EU to work together on the ambitious R&D challenges shared by both sides through frank exchange of views, discussions and networking, and it will lead to the formation of new Japan-EU research collaboration. Thank you.

[Closing]

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my hope that today's discussions on the global sustainable food supply at the 5th Waseda Brussels Conference will lead to further development and enrichment of academic and scientific exchanges as well as leading to greater Japan-EU policy and business collaborations on sustainable food supply systems.

Thank you very much for your attention.

(End)