

Statement by Mr. Yoshiyuki KAMEI, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan in his joint press conference with Mr. Lars Sponheim, Minister for Agriculture of Norway, following their bilateral Ministerial meeting in Ulvik, Norway on 30 April 2004

1. I had a meeting with Mr. Lars Sponheim, Minister for Agriculture of Norway, in Ulvik, Norway, to discuss the WTO negotiations of agriculture, in particular the future activities of G10 with a view to making the negotiation process move forward.

2. We recognize that we are entering into a critical phase of the negotiations towards a framework agreement by the end of July.

G10 is a group that consists of major food importing countries. G10 Members have been actively engaged in substantial reform of agricultural policies despite very difficult conditions which their respective agriculture face. G10 has also significantly contributed to the expansion of world agricultural trade, including exports from developing countries, through their successive efforts to improve market access.

This is why any framework agreement must duly reflect the interests and concerns of food importing countries, not only those of exporting countries.

It goes without saying that G10 Members are fully committed to the Doha Mandate. In order to make progress in the negotiations and achieve a realistic outcome under the said Mandate, it is quite fair and natural that all Members show sufficient flexibility to other Members' sensitivities.

3. We take the concept of the "co-existence of various types of agriculture" as the basic idea for the current negotiations. We place particular importance on Non Trade Concerns in agricultural negotiations, such as food security and national land conservation.

Through our discussion, I renewed my determination to work together with G10 Members towards establishing well-balanced agricultural trade rules with sufficient flexibility, which promote continuous reform of agricultural policies.

4. Today, I discussed with Minister Sponheim about our strategies for the agricultural negotiations and we confirmed the need to strengthen the cooperation and ties among G10 Members, and to continue to engage in active consultations with other Members and groups including developing Members, with a view to making further efforts to reach a framework agreement.

5. I am going to meet with Mr. Joseph Deiss, the President and Minister for Economics of Switzerland, on 4 May to further strengthen the unity of G10 as well as our contribution to the negotiations.

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(Note) G10 is a group of major food importing Members, consisting of Japan, Norway, Switzerland, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Bulgaria, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein and Mauritius