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The world is facing a new nutrition reality where chronic undernutrition and malnutrition, being overtaking traditional forms of malnutrition. This double burden of malnutrition imposes a set of new challenges for the world. The 70th Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit will be held online this year from Tuesday to Wednesday.

The summit aims to foster a common understanding of how to improve nutrition worldwide and provide a forum for discussions under three themes integrating nutrition with universal health coverage, building food systems, promoting resilient, providing data-driven accountability, and ensuring financing for nutrition. Various stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia, will be encouraged to share their policies, measures, and strategies and present new findings or policy commitments to accelerate the implementation of initiatives.

As the host and a country with one of the highest life expectancy, Japan is ready to share its experience accumulated over more than 100 years. In the history of nutrition, Japan’s dedication to nutrition improvement can provide useful insights into how the world can bring about the end of malnutrition with stronger nutrition-related policies and advance its policy according to the changing needs of the times.

Japan’s nutrition policy
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The first element focuses on promoting diets, specialists, and evidence. Japan’s nutrition policy was established in 2017 to foster a common understanding of how to improve nutrition worldwide and provide a forum for discussions under three themes integrating nutrition with universal health coverage, building food systems, promoting resilient, providing data-driven accountability, and ensuring financing for nutrition. Various stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia, will be encouraged to share their policies, measures, and strategies and present new findings or policy commitments to accelerate the implementation of initiatives.

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Japan helping Asian neighbors address nutrition problems

Global leaders have committed to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030 as part of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but malnutrition remains the biggest challenge of all.

Although Asia Pacific Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit 2021 was held online in March upon request, it was still able to attract over 2,000 participants from 130 countries.

In Japan, various facilities from schools and other institutions have been conducting healthy balanced food services with nutritional guidance.

In Japan, Nakamura said that nutrition problems that many countries in the world are also facing them and we need to come up with solutions to overcome both problems in the past 70 years and become the world’s highest longevity nation.

Based on this own experience, Japan has exported nutrition improvement programs to other Asian countries, helping them to create healthy populations.

Nakamura one of the first countries that Japan supported in this area. While some people in Vietnam still suffer from under-nutrition and low body weight, obesity and diabetes caused by an unbalanced diet was also becoming a big problem.

Based on this experience in unifying diet management, Nakamura, along with his private sector and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, tried to establish a program to manage to provide nutrition in Vietnam to offer education on collaborations with the Vietnam academy.

With the support of professionals from Nakamura’s association, he conceived and joined the University, the project took place in 2013, three years before this project in Vietnam was established.

After this, Nakamura created a nutrition project to support nutrition and education in Japan, Nakamura claimed.

“Japan adopted Washoku to combat hunger after World War II. Japan overcame severe food shortages and built a new nation, its people, and built a nation based on what the people could eat. Nakamura recalled.

“Japan's food culture has been passed on to people as a way of life, and the people are expected to maintain it.

Nakamura’s association, his university and Jumonji University, the project bore fruit in 2014, five years after this project in Vietnam was established.

“Throughout this period, we have engaged in nutrition education, including e-learning and online media, raising consumers’ awareness and introducing umami and other seasonings in taste to educate workers about nutrition.

In 2018, an N4G project in Cambodia found young women of childbearing age have low levels of intake, and which increases the risk of adverse outcomes in newborns and in mothers.

Young Cambodian women eat a lot of rice and promote changes in dietary habits, but their nutrition education, including e-learning and online media, raising consumers’ awareness and introducing umami and other seasonings in taste to educate workers about nutrition.

The Cambodian government provided meals containing vegetable and fruit, and which increases the risk of adverse outcomes in newborns and in mothers.

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