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PRIME MINISTER

JAPANESE REVIEW OF THEIR STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

When announcing the January import liberalisation measures, the Japanese Government noted that they would be carrying out a review of their standards and certification procedures. You may like to have our initial assessment of the outcome of this review, which was reported last weekend.

Seventeen Japanese laws are to be amended allowing : foreign suppliers more scope to apply directly for certification and hence to be treated more equally with domestic supplies; wider acceptance of foreign test data with simplification and speeding up of certification procedures; and the alignment of Japanese standards with international standards.

The changes should be of benefit particularly to UK exporters to Japan in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, chemicals and medical equipment and cover sectors involving some £100 m of UK exports. The Commission has been pressing for changes in Japanese standards which are commonly regarded as a non tariff barrier to our exports. The Commission made a direct contribution to the review and most of the specific requests have been addressed by the Japanese - though in some cases with undertakings to examine further. The exact method of implementation will be important and we will of course be watching this closely.

Overall the changes announced represent another useful step and a definite response by the Japanese Government to representations in this area by the EC and the US following the earlier liberalisation measures. We are still awaiting an announcement by the Japanese Government on its other review of the domestic distribution system.

LORD COCKFIELD

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1 Victoria Street
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The Prime Minister has noted the contents of Lord Cockfield's minute of 31 March about the Japanese review of their standards and certification procedures.

AJC

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