

## OPENING ADDRESSES

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Good morning, ladies and gentleman. First of all, on behalf of the organizing committee, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all participants in this symposium, particularly those who have traveled a long distance to come here. We also would like to thank Dr. Reifschneider, Director of the CGIAR Secretariat, and Dr. Hara, Professor of the University of Tokyo, for kindly sharing their time as keynote speakers in spite of their busy schedules. We also extend our appreciation to the other speakers, chairs, and commentators in the sessions to follow. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the United Nations University for this symposium. Dr. van Ginkel, Rector of the university, has given full support to this symposium by providing us this conference hall and encouraging his staff to help us.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to inform you that today's symposium is held in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of JIRCAS in 1993. Let me very briefly explain the history of agricultural research for international development in Japan to help you understand the objectives of this symposium.

You may be surprised to hear that Japan initiated its ODA programs as early as when the Colombo Plan started in 1954. By that time, Japan had successfully rehabilitated its postwar socioeconomic conditions. Hayato Ikeda, the prime minister at that time, declared that Japan had already recovered from the war and that the national economy was growing strongly. In 1962, the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency was founded to conduct a large number of technical cooperation projects mainly to promote agricultural development in tropical and subtropical regions by dispatching agricultural experts. In a short time, however, people involved in this realized that the agricultural technologies developed in temperate regions like Japan were difficult to adapt to tropical and subtropical regions without any modifications. As such, those involved decided that it would be indispensable to develop site-specific technologies adaptable to the regions concerned.

This was for this major reason that the Tropical Agricultural Research Center, TARC, was founded in 1970. TARC activities had very distinctive characteristics. Firstly, they focused on bilateral cooperation between Japan and other countries. In many cases, a very close relationship between TARC and partner institutes was developed in the framework of research collaboration. Secondly, TARC emphasized technology transfer mechanisms rather than funding the partner institutes for its research collaboration.

At the beginning for most projects, a very specific theme was chosen to solve problems through collaboration between TARC and partner institutes. However, regarding the demands for developing appropriate agricultural systems as a whole, the scene became more interdisciplinary. TARC also developed better relationships with international research centers such as the International Rice Research Institute even before the CGIAR system which was established in 1971. Honestly speaking, however, Japan has contributed to CGIAR systems in terms of financing rather than personnel resources up to the present.

In 1993, TARC was transformed to JIRCAS by adding the fisheries research function and more staff members. JIRCAS also extended its activity areas to include all developing regions worldwide. In fact, JIRCAS expanded its function to meet the requirements as a research institute for international development of agriculture both in name and reality. However, the framework of institute to institute collaboration has remained unchanged until the present.

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Recently, as part of the administrative reform by the government, JIRCAS has become more autonomous and independent in its operations. At the same time, we are obliged to adapt a rigid external evaluation system. Other government-affiliated organizations engaged in international development such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Institute of Developing Economics are part of the same system, and all national universities will also become part of the system from April, 2004. This situation might be a good opportunity for all these organizations to move onto a new stage, to compete and collaborate with relevant institutions in the international community.

In addition, our government renewed the nation's ODA charters last September, and the Council of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Research submitted an action plan entitled the "Promotion Policy of International Agricultural Research: Japan's Challenge to Solve Global Problems of Food and Environment." All these movements clearly signify Japan's intention to contribute to the international community more effectively and efficiently while creating partnerships among relevant organization, as a whole.

JIRCAS is carrying out its mandate by conducting R&D projects aimed at the development of sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries activities in harmony with the environment to stabilize the world's supply and demand of food with emphasis placed on the reduction of hunger and poverty in the developing countries.

The purpose of this symposium is to reach a consensus on what and how Japan should play a role in the international development of agriculture through research and development. In this connection, we particularly want to know what JIRCAS should do as a national center in the next decade.

Finally, I do hope you will enjoy the symposium. Thank you very much for your kind attention.