

Congratulatory Address

Shigeru Motai*

I wish to express my congratulations to Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), opening this international symposium, intending to form a new network for agricultural research among tropical and subtropical islands, at its Okinawa Subtropical Station, with participation of many researchers from at home and abroad.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council decided the “Promotional” in September 2003 and disclosed its policy on international agricultural research towards the achievement of United Nations Millennium Development Goals on eradication of the hunger and poverty, and against global-scale environmental problems. Japan shall, under the tightened financial condition, promote with its own judgment the efficient and effective research and development in international agriculture. To promote such a research and development, strategic and emphasized research fields will be selected based on the policy, the cooperation at home and abroad will be strengthened and the regime for facilitating international research exchange will be developed towards the effective use of limited resources and strengthening the problem solving capacity.

In the developing regions in the tropics and subtropics, technologies required for sustainable development should be developed and disseminated and at the same time capacity development should also be targeted. JIRCAS is the only institution of Japan working for agriculture, forestry and fisheries research in these regions. It has a lot of achievements including basic findings for the breeding of plants tolerant to hostile environments such as drought and its role has been becoming more important. Particularly, Okinawa Subtropical Station, which locates in a small island under the subtropical climate in Japan, is an appropriate research institution for conducting the research on agriculture and its environments of the islands in the tropics and subtropics in the world.

Over 35 years ago, I was engaged in the establishment of the Okinawa Subtropical Station of the Tropical Agricultural Research Center, the predecessor of JIRCAS. Therefore, I have been impressed personally by the well-developed research facilities equipped during past 35 years since its establishment, for instance, a lysimeter and sloped experimental fields constructed in 2003 for technology development to be used in island agriculture and environments and a glasshouse specified for use of genetically engineered plants to produce stress-tolerant plants.

I would like to conclude my congratulatory address by wishing the fruitful discussions in the international symposium and hoping Okinawa Subtropical Station of JIRCAS becomes a leading institution of the world through the activating the agricultural research in the tropics and subtropics for the tropics and subtropics.

* Chairman, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries