

Inaugural Address

Masashi Kobayashi
Director General
TARC

Distinguished Guests, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Symposium Organizing Committee of the Tropical Agriculture Research Center (TARC), I have the honor and privilege to open the "International Symposium on Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest Lands in the Tropics" sponsored by the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan.

Above all, I would like to extend my cordial welcome to all the guests and the participants, in particular to those who have come to Japan from abroad.

The TARC was established in 1970 with the objective of contributing to the development of agricultural and forestry technology in the tropical areas in undertaking research programs in a spirit of international collaboration.

The basic principle of our research activities is to work together with overseas scientists on a partnership basis to solve technical obstacles which hamper the agricultural and forestry development of the tropical and subtropical countries and regions. The TARC activities cover a fairly wide range of research fields such as crop production, plant protection, soil and water management, pasture and animal husbandry, agriculture and food engineering, forestry and agroforestry, etc.

One of the major activities of the TARC is to send research scientists to overseas research institutions located in the tropical and subtropical countries and regions to conduct collaborative research work on the above-mentioned research areas. Over 40 staff members of the TARC with long-term assignments have been engaged each year in such collaborative activities in many parts of the world, mainly in the Asian countries and partly in South America and Africa during the past two decades.

I would like to add that TARC will initiate a new visiting research program this forthcoming October, in which invited senior researchers from abroad will carry out advanced research in specific thrusts in collaboration with the research staff at TARC Okinawa Research Station, Ishigaki Island under subtropical conditions.

Another important activity of the TARC is to hold international symposia for exchanging information and ideas among different countries and among scientists concerned. Since 1967 these symposia have been held each year, covering such subjects as crop production, plant protection, soil and water management, pasture and animal husbandry, forestry, agroforestry, etc.

The present symposium, the twenty-sixth of its kind, will give the opportunity to consider the current situation and future prospects of rehabilitation of degraded forest lands in the tropics.

There is a growing awareness on the part of the scientific community about the deleterious impact on the environment of deforestation which is proceeding at a rapid pace worldwide, in particular in the tropical zone. The most important task is to promote the rehabilitation of the vast expanse of degraded forest areas in a large number of tropical countries. To achieve this objective, research should be focussed on the development of appropriate technologies for the sound management and exploitation of forest resources on a sustainable basis.

In the present symposium, the deterioration of forest lands will be evaluated based on scientific data, and the rehabilitation and improvement of the degraded forest lands will be discussed, with emphasis placed on the sustainable utilization of these lands for forestry and agroforestry activities.

I am convinced that these exchanges of information will further contribute to the enhancement of research in these areas.

I sincerely hope that this symposium will be significant and useful in contributing to the development

of effective measures for the promotion of sustainable forestry and agroforestry in the tropics and subtropics.

Again, I do hope that our friendship and cooperation will be further strengthened through our joint effort in reaching this common target of immense importance.

Thank you.