

Inaugural Address

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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 Plant Genetic Resource Management in the Tropics", which is sponsored by the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan and being held in commemoration of One Century of Agricultural Research in 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 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 development of the tropical and sub-tropical countries and regions.

One of the major activities of the TARC is to send research scientists to overseas research institutions located in the tropical and sub-tropical countries and regions to conduct collaborative research work on various subjects relating to agriculture and forestry. 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 during the past two decades. In addition, new research facilities for the TARC Visiting Research Fellowship Program were completed in 1992 at the Okinawa Branch of the TARC and ten overseas scientists are invited each year to carry out collaborative studies.

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, and so on.

As I mentioned previously, the TARC has been contributing significantly to agricultural development in the tropical and sub-tropical regions during these 20 years. The TARC will, however, be reorganized into the new "Research Center for International Development of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries" this coming October 1, with the objectives of strengthening the activities in carrying out studies on fisheries along with agriculture and forestry, and expanding research sites from tropical and sub-tropical regions to worldwide developing areas.

The present symposium, the twenty-seventh of its kind, will give the opportunity to consider the current situation and future prospects of plant genetic resource management in the tropics.

As emphasized during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, there is an urgent need to develop appropriate technologies and global strategies for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources. In this symposium, various aspects relating to the management of plant genetic resources will be discussed in detail, with emphasis placed on technical advances.

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 plant genetic resource management in the tropics.

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

Thank you.