

Inaugural Address

Keiji Kainuma
Director General, JIRCAS

Distinguished Guests, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Symposium Organizing Committee of the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), I have the honor and privilege to open the "International Symposium on Fruit Production in the Tropics and Subtropics", which is sponsored by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan, in cooperation with the Fruit Tree Research Station (FTRS) and is being held in conjunction with the XXIVth International Horticultural Congress in Kyoto.

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

As you may know, the Tropical Agriculture Research Center (TARC) was reorganized into a new Center, Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), on October 1st, 1993.

The reorganization of TARC into a new Center is an important aspect of Japan's contribution to the welfare of the international community through the promotion of research for the development of technology in the field of agriculture to respond to the changes in the world situation.

The research activities of the new Center will encompass all the fields of agriculture, including fisheries for the first time, while forestry will be further promoted. This expansion of the research fields, needless to say could not have been achieved without the strong support all the institutes affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan.

In addition, the research activities of the new Center will not be limited to collaboration with the developing countries in the tropics and subtropics but will cover wider geographic zones such as cool areas and the temperate zone.

One of the major activities of JIRCAS is to dispatch research scientists to overseas research institutions located in developing countries to conduct collaborative research work on various subjects relating to agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Over 40 staff members of JIRCAS with long-term assignments have been engaged each year in such collaborative activities in many parts of the world during a quarter of a century.

In addition, to support these activities, JIRCAS intends to consolidate the structure of research at the Center in Tsukuba and at the Okinawa Subtropical Station of the Center by promoting advanced studies relating to biotechnological fields, computer simulation of selected biological and environmental processes relevant to the developing countries, etc.

Another important activity of JIRCAS is to hold international symposia for exchanging information and ideas among different countries and among scientists concerned. These symposia have been held each year, covering various subjects of agricultural research since 1967.

The present symposium is the first symposium to be held after the inauguration of the new Center and it will give the opportunity to discuss the current situation and future prospects of fruit production in the tropics and subtropics.

In the tropical and subtropical regions more than 600 edible fruits grow, of which about 20 are considered to be of worldwide importance, such as banana, avocado, mango, pineapple, etc. Production of these fruits also plays a major role in the international food trade worldwide. On the other hand, fruits from the temperate zone are introduced to and cultivated in the tropics and subtropics for domestic consumption and as new export products. In the symposium, various aspects relating to the fruit production in the tropics and subtropics, including the collection and utilization of fruit tree genetic resources, methods of cultivation, methods of control of major pests and diseases as well as postharvest technology will be dis-

cussed in detail to develop appropriate technologies.

I sincerely hope that this symposium will be significant and useful in contributing to the development of effective measures for the promotion of tropical fruit production.

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.