

Inaugural Address

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Distinguished Guests, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Symposium Organizing Committee, I have the honor and privilege to open the international symposium on "Innovative Weed Management Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture" which is co-organized by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), the Asian-Pacific Weed Science Society (APWSS) and the Food and Fertilizer Technology Center for the Asian and Pacific Region (FFTC).

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

On this occasion, I would like to introduce the research activities of JIRCAS. JIRCAS is engaged in two types of activities. First, approximately 40 research scientists on a long term basis are dispatched each year to overseas research institutions located in the developing regions to conduct collaborative research work on various subjects relating to agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

In addition, to support these activities, JIRCAS has consolidated the structure of research at the Center in Tsukuba and at the Okinawa Subtropical Station by promoting advanced studies relating to biotechnological fields, computer simulation of selected biological and environmental processes as well as information systems.

One of the important activities of JIRCAS is to hold international symposia every year. This is the second symposium of the new Center and it will give the opportunity to discuss the current situation and future prospects of weed management. The symposium consists of two sessions, Session I "Weed Problems in Relation to Sustainable Agriculture" and Session II "Innovative Trends of Herbicide Use for Sustainable Agriculture".

The weed problem is indeed very complex. On the one hand, weeds interfere with the growth of crops through competition for soil nutrients, water and light and sometimes crop yields are markedly reduced. On the other hand, when weed control is implemented, it often involves the use of chemicals. Such methods may adversely affect the natural environment which in turn may not be compatible with the pursuit of sustainable agriculture. Therefore, to address this problem, research efforts should place emphasis on the elucidation of the mechanisms regulating the interaction of weeds with the components of the crop ecosystems to develop methods of integrated control to minimize the use of chemicals.

I sincerely hope that this symposium will be significant and useful in contributing to the development of effective measures for weed management compatible with the promotion of sustainable agriculture.

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.