

## Opening Address

**Nobuyoshi Maeno**

Director General, JIRCAS

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 “Agricultural Technology Research for Sustainable Development in Developing Regions”, which is organized by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan with the cooperation of several national institutes affiliated to MAFF.

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

JIRCAS was established in October 1993 as a result of the reorganization of the former Tropical Agriculture Research Center (TARC) to further promote research for the development of agricultural technology to cope with the changes in the world situation.

The research activities of JIRCAS encompass all the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Needless to say, this expansion of the research fields could not have been achieved without the strong support of the institutes affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan. The research activities of JIRCAS are not limited to collaboration with developing countries in the tropics and subtropics but cover wider geographic regions such as cool areas and temperate zones. 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. In addition, to support these activities, JIRCAS consolidated the structure of research at the Center in Tsukuba and at the Okinawa Subtropical Station of the Center by promoting advanced studies relating to biological fields, computer simulation of selected economic and environmental processes relevant to the developing countries, postharvest technology, etc.

The present symposium which is the 7th symposium organized by JIRCAS assumes a special significance since it coincides with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Center. To mark this event, a broad theme was selected for the symposium, reflecting past, present achievements as well as the future orientation of agricultural technology research in the developing regions. In this regard, we are very pleased that representatives of several international and national agricultural research organizations as well as universities have accepted to be with us today to share their experiences and expertise.

Indeed the priorities and orientation of agricultural technology research are changing continuously to meet the requirements of the countries in the respective regions. For example, when TARC was established in 1970, agricultural technology research exemplified by the Green Revolution was mainly production-centered to

address the chronic food shortages, particularly in the Asian countries. Cropping intensification associated with the use of a large quantity of inputs enabled most countries in that region and elsewhere to become self-sufficient in staples such as rice, wheat and maize.

Today, at the start of the new century, agricultural technology research faces major challenges. Increased food production which remains a priority due to the continuous increase of the world population, must be achieved within the context of severe global environmental problems and a dwindling resource base, particularly in marginal production areas.

To address global food and environmental issues, it appears that the soundest and most reasonable approach is the promotion of economically sustainable development of agriculture, forestry and fisheries activities compatible with the preservation of the natural ecosystems.

To this end, progress in research for the improvement of conventional and indigenous technology and application of more advanced techniques, including biotechnology, information technology, post-harvest technology and of new materials as well the development of new integrated production and management systems based on a multidisciplinary approach is essential.

At the same time, it is also important that all of those involved in these efforts at the local, national and international levels, including the scientific community, producers, administrators and policy-makers, the trade and industry sectors and consumers forge close links to enhance food security and to improve the living conditions of the rural communities.

I am convinced that valuable information on the orientation of agricultural technology development for the developing regions in the 21st century will be exchanged throughout the discussions during this symposium.

I again wish to express my cordial welcome to all the guests and participants.

Thank you.