

Welcome Remarks

MC: Thank you very much, President Iiyama. We would now like to invite welcome remarks from our guests. First, we would like to invite from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Deputy Director General of the International Cooperation Bureau, Mr. Katsuki Oda. The floor is yours.

Katsuki Oda: Thank you kindly for your introduction. My name is Oda with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. First and foremost allow me to extend my heartfelt welcome at the opening of the J-FARD and JIRCAS international symposium. In developing countries some 70 percent of the poor live in rural communities and their livelihoods are dependent on agriculture. In many developing countries, assistance to agriculture is important from two perspectives, in terms of contributing to poverty reduction. First is poverty reduction through improved income of the farming community and also through increased employment; in other words, poverty reduction at the individual and the community level. Another is poverty reduction through economic growth in countries where the key industry is agriculture. Also, agriculture is intertwined with global skill challenges, such as water, food, energy, environment and climate change, as well as natural disasters.

On top of the development agenda, such as MDG, it is clear that the importance of international agricultural R&D is increasing in addressing these global challenges. As far as Japan is concerned, when addressing the development assistance we are placing emphasis on the notion of ownership among the developing countries, as well as the perspective of human security.

The philosophy behind human security is to protect people from threats against their survival and their lifestyles. It aims to protect individuals as well as regional communities and to seek capacity-building, and to create a society whereby individuals could pursue self-realization and could live with dignity. In the area of agriculture as well, for the purpose of improved livelihood of poor farmers and to offer increased employment opportunities in rural communities, we have taken a human security approach, and we are addressing a participatory type of assistance focusing on capacity-building among the rural communities.

As far as R&D in agriculture is concerned, there is assistance to various centers under the CGIAR. We have been supporting projects expected to contribute to improved livelihood for the poor and whose results could be accepted and could be adopted rather in the field.

For example, one of the new varieties in Africa is the so-called NERICA, which has become well-known here in Japan. This was developed by one of the CGIAR research centers, the Africa Rice Center or WARDA. Japan has been providing personnel and financial assistance to WARDA and JICA has been promoting technical cooperation so that R&D of NERICA could be further extended. Also, some 30 Japanese researchers are working within CGIAR research centers and are working to develop technology and to carry out R&D which could bring about improvement in agricultural productivity, and we are offering assistance to the activities of such Japanese in such areas.

In order to successfully carry out agricultural development, we need linkage not just among domestic researchers and research institutions; there is need for extensive linkage with the

implementing organizations. In the context of the grain revolution in Asia, on top of R&D improvement, through irrigation, through advice and technology provided toward agriculture and through the provision of farming equipment and fertilizers, there is improved productivity in the agricultural sector. Based on the results gained through the linkage among the researchers, once we have linkage among the various implementing organizations and we see ownership among developing countries can we really say that this is a success.

In order to address difficult new challenges, such as the impact of climate change on agriculture, we believe that an application of innovative technology could be the key. There are increasing concerns about the impact of climate change on agricultural industry and developing countries. We need linkage among people who are addressing this problem, as well as carrying out human resource development with wide perspective. And we are seeking challenges among the young agricultural researchers.

In terms of international cooperation, agricultural R&D is only one of many topics which we carry out. However, if there is strong resolve of each researcher to contribute to the solution of poverty, food issues in developing countries, then their activities will bring about greater impact. I do hope that through this symposium, various people inside and outside Japan will be able to share experiences and views so that we could make strong progress towards sustainable growth. Thank you for your kind attention.

MC: Thank you very much. Next, I would like to invite Mr. Hiroyuki Takeya to say a few words.

Hiroyuki Takeya: Ladies and gentlemen, I am Takeya, Director General, Secretariat of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council, MAFF. On behalf of MAFF I would like to extend our welcome to the J-FARD and JIRCAS international symposium. We at MAFF are promoting the research and development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Particularly, we have three goals in promoting that agricultural research and development.

First is the R&D in agricultural, forestry and fisheries. We would like to achieve the new evolution of agricultural research. So far agriculture has played a role in supplying food, but in addition to that role, the new R&D will be focusing on resolving the environmental and energy issues in the world. Therefore, we would like to support the R&D that would help resolving those issues.

The second goal of promoting R&D is the R&D that would respond to the needs of consumers on safe food and food security. Food is the basic need in the lives of people. Therefore, food has to be safe and consumers have to have confidence on safe food. And not only the policy areas; the research is important to set up the foundation for resolving the issues. In recent years we have various risks around consumers, like avian influence or BSE. Therefore, we would like to support and enhance the R&D that would alleviate those many risks surrounding consumers.

And the third is the pillar of supporting R&D that will respond to the resolution of global issues. Around agricultural, forestry and fisheries industries, there is global warming, or that global warming has to be resolved in parallel with achieving global biodiversity. Therefore, we at MAFF

would promote R&D that would help responding to those global issues as we promote our research and development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

To promote that R&D, of course domestic policies are important; however, the researchers at home and abroad have to have the firm collaboration. In that sense, this J-FARD and JIRCAS international symposium, which is well-known with its open structure, it is really a timely and appropriate to have this forum today. We do hope that this fora would help the researchers and attendants and participants to have the close linkage in their collaboration. And I do hope that this symposium will make the great success. Thank you very much.