

Kiyoshi Fujimoto
Research Councilor, MAFF

Thank you for the introduction. My name is Fujimoto, Research Councilor at MAFF. I would like to say a few words at this opening of the TARC-JIRCAS 40th Anniversary International Symposium. JIRCAS used to be TARC - Tropical Agricultural Research Center. And today, this marks its 40th Anniversary, so I would like to congratulate JIRCAS and also to pay my tribute to all those people who contributed to JIRCAS. I am sure that this was possible due to the effort of the president and all employees of JIRCAS and also to the participants today and all the other people who had something to do with JIRCAS. JIRCAS has been a testing and research institution for the agricultural and forestry and fisheries research in developing countries. And it has been a focal point of CGIAR and the base in our country for international agricultural research. It has collaborated with other overseas research institutions and international organizations in order to solve the world food and environmental issues and it has made good contribution.

The ministry has set Japan's Basic Plan on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in March, and it states that Japan must contribute to world food security through technical co-operation and also contribute to the environmental issues through active research and technological incorporation. And at our ministry, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries Basic Plan states that we must conduct technological innovation development in order to solve the global environmental issues, to eradicate poverty and hunger. So this shows that in order to carry out the basic responsibility of a state, which is to secure stable food supply into the future, it is extremely important to conduct international research and technical cooperation.

Last month, UNFPA announced its white paper on global population. And it says that the population in 2010 was 6.987 billion and by 2011, it will breach 7 billion. So there is an increasing demand toward agricultural products due to the increase in demand for bio-fuel due to economic development. And also, there is an effect from global climate change and the food supply is being constrained. So structural factors of tight food demand and supply are causing the food price increases and other problems related to food supply in countries around the world.

So, I came late to this situation. Last month in Niigata, the APEC Food Security Ministerial Meeting was held and 21 member countries of APEC and regional and international organizations participated in this meeting and it discussed securing world food security by increasing the food supply. In the ministerial declaration, it said that in order to feed the growing population, it is indispensable to enhance productivity and to put focus on research and development. It likewise said that in order to increase investment and research and cooperation in the area of greenhouse gas effect, it is important to cooperate through the voluntary networks, since they showed expectations towards research and development.

We must solve these issues by gathering all research efforts throughout Japan and abroad. Today and tomorrow, we will be holding this symposium. And there will be a keynote speech from a member of Parliament, Mr. Shiraishi, on the building up of Japan's research and development capacity and international cooperation. In Session One, there will a theme of international agriculture, forestry, fisheries research network. Session Two, development-oriented agriculture research institutes. And in Session Three, this involves the commissioned project of our ministry which is the International Research Network project, and the theme is networking for Malaysia by Japanese agricultural research bodies. So, we must bring together all the research efforts in Japan and abroad in this area. We must base our research on new activities surrounding international agriculture and forestry research. And I think it is very significant that we exchange frank opinions and share the recognition towards further research in this area.

Lastly, but not least, it is important to solidify our cooperation in Japan and abroad to solve these global issues. And the role of JIRCAS is very important. So I will close my remarks by wishing for further development of the collective researches of today's participants and JIRCAS. I hope these two days will be very meaningful for you. Thank you.