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# Welcome Statements

## Masamichi Saigo

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Hello everyone. My name is Saigo. I am Research Councilor of the secretariat of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council (AFFRC) of MAFF. It is my great pleasure to say a few words at the opening of the JIRCAS International Symposium 2012. As Dr. Iwanaga has just mentioned, we are beset with a significant population increase globally, and there has been economic development of some developing countries, as well as increasing demand for biofuel, which is driving up global demand for agricultural products. Adding to this challenge is climate change and biodiversity, which are also having an impact. Therefore, agricultural production is beset with significant pressures today.

As already mentioned, in the United States this year there were events of high temperatures as well as droughts, which are driving up global food prices. In developing nations, the price volatility as well as climate change and changes in the social environment will exert enormous pressure because they are vulnerable to such changes. International forums have been held within the political world as well as research areas. For example, in May of this year in Kazan, Russia, the APEC Food Security Ministerial Meeting was held. During this meeting the APEC Kazan Declaration on Food Security was adopted. Research and development in the agriculture areas as well as strengthening the capacity of researchers in the developing nations were identified to be important challenges going forward. Against this backdrop, we must strengthen the resilience of food production against climate change as well as natural disasters. We must achieve this by having researchers working together globally.

With respect to Japan, the grand design for food production is the basic plan for food agriculture and agricultural villages. It has been emphasized that we will contribute to the world's food security by providing technical cooperation to developing nations as well as contributing to the global environmental issues through actively implementing research and development globally. In the basic plan for AFFRC, we are emphasizing the need to implement technological development to tackle the issues of poverty and hunger, as well as the global environmental issues. However, this cannot be implemented by one country alone, and therefore we hope that we can make available the technologies we have developed in Japan for the purpose of international research.

In Japan, because we have limited land we have always used land in a multifaceted way. We have been managing agriculture as well as national resources. I believe that people in Japan have utilized the benefit of the ecological environment, and this is evaluated very highly. Recently, the FAO has established the so-called "World Agriculture Heritage" to showcase the traditional agriculture methods utilizing the local environment as well as for the land-utilization system by protecting biodiversity. Satoyama of Noto and Sado have been designated a world agricultural heritage.

The multi-functionality of agriculture is very rooted in Japan, and eco-service preservation, a more modern term,

is now often used, which means that we have always placed emphasis on the traditional technologies prevailing in our country. At the same time, this is also bringing about resilience against natural disasters. So this is not just traditional technology but has to be based on scientific knowledge as well. We would like to utilize our experience as well as technologies to enhance the resilience for developing nations. In terms of the global research efforts, The Global Research Alliance (GRA) has been promoted by New Zealand from 2011. Furthermore, one of the research programs of CGIAR is the CCAFS. Agricultural research for climate change has been pursued. Japan is taking a proactive role in these frameworks. For example, in the rice paddy group of the GRA, one of our researchers from Japan who is present here today is serving as the joint chairman. JIRCAS, the organizer of today's event, has been very active in developing nations to pursue comprehensive research in the areas of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. It is also serving as a focal point in the CGIAR, working together with the international agricultural research organizations as well as international institutions, making contributions.

For this symposium, we have participants who are responsible in the area of research and development, as well as from the government in the area of agriculture. We will be sharing the results of research and engaging in discussions regarding how we can enhance resilience for a better food production system, as well as discussing issues prevailing in Asia and African continents. That is the reason why we have to focus on the substance of these efforts to make this more meaningful.

I hope that significant discussions can take place during this symposium. On the part of MAFF, the result of the discussions of the symposium will be brought to bear in our activities. In closing, I would like to express my hope for the success of this symposium, and also express my gratitude and respect to the organizers and the people who are engaged in research. Thank you.