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# Opening Remarks

## Masa Iwanaga

President, JIRCAS

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Distinguished guests, participants, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the symposium organizers, I have the honor and the privilege to open the JIRCAS International Symposium 2013, “New Direction of Sustainable Technology Development in Asia: Changing Rural Livelihood and Japanese Advantage,” which is organized by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences, JIRCAS, with the kind support of United Nations University, the Research Council Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Policy Research Institute of the ministry, the National Agriculture and Food Research Organization, as well as the Japan Forum on International Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development.

First of all, I would like to extend my cordial welcome to all the guests and participants, particularly those who came from overseas. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to our prominent keynote speaker, Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, for his kind acceptance to deliver a very relevant lecture in this symposium. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the other speakers and chairs and discussants in the sessions to follow this afternoon and tomorrow.

I am also glad to mention that this year JIRCAS is celebrating its 20th anniversary since its reorganization in 1993 from its predecessor, the Tropical Agriculture Research Center. In this symposium we will introduce JIRCAS milestones in a slide show titled “20 Years of JIRCAS.”

JIRCAS, with its mission to improve agricultural technologies in developing regions, started its third medium-term plan in April 2011, and we set up a new research program titled “Technology Development for Income and Livelihood Improvement of the Rural Population in Developing Regions.” This new program aims to promote the improvement of income in rural areas and the practical uses of local resources. It also plans to come up with appropriate technological innovations for applications to those areas.

To generate higher income, improving agricultural productivity and increasing value addition to agricultural products, having considered equally important on the practical use of local resources, this program aims to establish recycling-oriented societies based on sustainable productivity and diversity of both the environment and the culture.

The key word of the symposium this year is sustainable technology development. In this respect, it is tasked to focus on the utilization of Japan’s advanced technology to contribute to rural livelihood development in Asia. Rapid economic development in this region has ushered in accelerating demand for diversification of new agricultural technologies. Japanese agriculture also has to keep abreast of global development and find novel approaches to deal with the challenges of globalization.

Aimed at seeking the future directions of agricultural research activities which must be pursued by JIRCAS and other Japanese research organizations, this symposium provides an avenue for the exchange of opinions among experts from related organizations on changing food situations and agriculture systems in this region, as well as on the need for new technologies that can respond to the changes.

It also tries to identify effective ways for sharing research results in the region and to link them with achieving sustainable development of agriculture and related industries in Japan.

At JIRCAS, being a center of agricultural research for development in Japan, we endeavor to keep our research programs timely and relevant to address important global issues which are changing continuously. We hope that this symposium would become a good opportunity for sharing our research outcomes in order to find a new direction for our partnership for rural development.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere hope that with your precious contributions, this symposium will be fruitful and will attain the objective for which it was organized. Thank you very much.