

# Opening Remarks



**Masa Iwanaga**

President, JIRCAS

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Distinguished guests, participants, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is my great honor and privilege to open the JIRCAS International Symposium 2018, “Women in Fisheries: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Contributions to Research and Industry”.

This symposium is organized by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences, JIRCAS for short, and co-organized by the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency.

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere welcome to all guests and participants. In particular, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the keynote speakers, Dr. Meryl Williams of the Asian Fisheries Society, and Dr. Kaoru Nakata of the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency, as well as to all of our other speakers who have traveled great distances to participate today and present their in-depth knowledge and insight. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the chairpersons, moderator, and all of our staff who have been working behind the scenes.

Through various joint research programs in the field of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the tropical and developing regions, JIRCAS has not only contributed to the international advancement of scientific research and collaboration, but has also provided valuable assistance in fostering human resource development, including the promotion of gender equality.

One of the keywords of this International Symposium is “Gender Equality”. JIRCAS actively participates in a program entitled “Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment”, that is supported by funds from Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, with the goal of further promoting women’s contributions to scientific and technological advancement in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Under the auspices of this program, JIRCAS is currently seeking to promote active roles for female researchers, both domestically and internationally.

At JIRCAS, we convene an International Symposium every year focusing on a topic of importance in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. This year, in connection with the issue of “Gender Equality”, we made a decision to focus on fisheries and women’s contributions. In the past, fisheries-related work was typically considered to consist of hard physical work at sea, and to be a workplace for men only. However, nowadays, an increasing number of female workers in the field of fisheries are showing a very high level of potential and contribution in their various roles. Especially in the rural areas, the involvement of women as leaders as well as workers, are indispensable to the fisheries industry. As researchers, regarding women’s abilities, there is no doubt whatsoever as to what they are able to accomplish, and we expect their contributions to technology development and its dissemination will become even more prominent if we indeed pursue the realization of gender equality in earnest.

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Another keyword for this Symposium is the SDGs, which means Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs have been put forth by the United Nations, aiming to demonstrate the scale and ambition of the new universal Agenda toward 2030 for Sustainable Development. JIRCAS is actively seeking to realize the SDGs, including those of “Gender Equality” and “Life Below Water” which are relevant to “Fisheries” as we understand.

Today, leading female administrators and scientists in the field of fisheries have been invited to share with us their research findings and views on the need for the active participation, involvement, and leadership contribution of women working in fisheries research and technology development for securing the SDGs, thus leading to food security and our healthy future

Finally, I would like to express my sincere wishes, that with the important contributions of our distinguished speakers, along with the participation of our valued audience, that this Symposium will be fruitful and achieve the objectives for which it was organized.

Thank you very much.