

## Welcome Address

Kashio HIRAMATSU  
Director-General  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
Research Council Secretariat

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen;

On behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, I wish to extend my most sincere greetings to all the participants of this symposium, particularly to the foreign delegates who have come all the way to Japan to attend the symposium.

Since 1967, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has initiated the annual international symposium under the Tropical Agriculture Research Program. In 1970, the Tropical Agriculture Research Center was instituted and is expanding its activities from year to year. Since its establishment, the Center has been holding these annual international symposia. The symposium for this year is the 10th one and the topic is focused on "Virus Diseases of Tropical Crops".

Needless to say, so much difficulties are found in agricultural production in tropical areas, among which diseases and insect pests are the major ones. Especially, plant virus diseases are causing great damage to almost every kind of crops.

At the same time, researches on plant virus diseases advanced remarkably in recent years. For example, new techniques of electron microscopy, discovery of mycoplasma as a new virus-like pathogen, transmission studies through insect vectors, soil and seeds, disease control by resistant varieties, vaccination method with attenuated virus, and so on.

The purpose of this symposium is to understand each other, the virus disease situation in respective countries and to exchange information on plant virus research. I am sure this purpose will be fulfilled and the symposium would be useful for future research activities of all the participants.

I also hope sincerely that all of you will have the enjoyable and fruitful time during the symposium.

Again, I would like to welcome all of you to this meeting.

Thank you.