

Opening Address

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Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and pleasure for us, as convenors of the Symposium, to have here so many respected scientists and authorities from home and abroad to participate in the Symposium, whose theme is centered on "Methods of Crop Breeding". On behalf of the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of you for your participation, and in particular, I would like to extend our cordial welcome to the distinguished delegates from abroad.

The Tropical Agriculture Research Center was established in 1970 with the objective of contributing to the development of tropical agriculture by undertaking agricultural research programs in a spirit of international collaboration. The basic principle of our research activities is to work jointly with overseas scientists on a partner-relationship basis to solve technical obstacles which hamper the agricultural development of the tropical countries. The activities of the Center cover a fairly wide range of research fields: crop production, plant protection, soil science, livestock and veterinary sciences, agricultural engineering, farm mechanization and forestry.

One of the major activities of the Center is to send research scientists from Japan to research institutions located in tropical countries to carry out cooperative research work in the agricultural field. About 35 staff members of the Center are presently engaged in such activities in many parts of the tropics. In order to establish cooperative research programs, we have sent a number of fact-finding missions to the tropical countries and, in addition, have invited a number of overseas research administrators and senior scientists from abroad. Cooperative programs are thus set up on the basis of mutual interests and understanding between cooperating institutions abroad and the Tropical Agriculture Research Center in Japan. A number of researchers have been dispatched mainly with long-term, and partly with short-term assignments. When the effective cooperation requires any additional basic research work with the use of sophisticated facilities, which are presently not available in the cooperating institutions, our Center invites to Japan the research partners involved so as to enable them to conduct the necessary work.

Another important activity of the Center is to hold international symposia to offer a forum for exchanging research information and views among different countries and among scientists concerned. The symposia have been held every year since 1967. The present Symposium is the eleventh. The subjects vary from year to year; they are aimed at covering topics of general interest centered on problems of particular importance and urgency pertaining to the development of tropical agriculture. During the last ten years, the symposia have covered such subjects as rice diseases and insects and their control, maize production, food legumes production, optimization of fertilizer effect, animal production, water management in paddy fields and so forth. As generally accepted, crop improvement has been, and should be, one of the very basic undertakings to enable the farmers to adopt new technologies so as to further increase their crop production. In the past, however, few discussions have been concerned with the improvement of methods of crop breeding, while the importance of such techniques has generally been recognized among us. But now, the time has come to tackle these problems.

Distinguished participants, I sincerely hope that all of you will have a fruitful and enjoyable time during the present symposium.

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

Thank you.