

## Inaugural Address

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Distinguished Guests and Participants,

On behalf of the Symposium Organizing Committee of the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, I have the honor and privilege to open the International Symposium on Soybean under the cosponsorship of the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan (TARC) and the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC).

Above all, I would like to extend my cordial welcome to all the participants, in particular to those who have come over to Japan from abroad.

The Tropical Agriculture Research Center was established in 1970 with the objective of contributing to the development of agricultural technology in the tropical areas in undertaking research programs in a spirit of international collaboration. The basic principle of our research activities is to work together with overseas scientists on a partnership 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 such as crop production, soil fertility, plant protection, forestry, agricultural engineering, etc.

One of the major activities of the Center is to send research scientists from Japan to overseas research institutions located in the tropical countries to conduct cooperative research work in agricultural fields. About 40 staff members of the Center with long-term assignments are engaged each year in such cooperative activities in many parts of the world, mainly in the Asian countries and partly in the Latin American countries.

An other important activity of the Center is to hold international symposia for exchanging information and views among different countries and among scientists concerned. Since 1967 the symposia have been held every year, covering such subjects as crop diseases, animal production, methods of crop breeding, optimization of fertilizer effect, water management in paddy fields, silvicultural technologies, etc.

The present symposium, the seventeenth of its kind will give the opportunity to consider various aspects relating to the cultivation of soybeans. Undoubtedly, there is a growing awareness of the importance of soybean due to the remarkable versatility in the use of the crop. Indeed, soybeans with their well-balanced composition in protein, carbohydrate and lipid are processed to supply a variety of nutritious food products in several countries of Asia. Also, soybeans are a major source of edible vegetable oil for human consumption and of protein meals in animal feeds in numerous countries. Although soybeans are consumed on a large scale worldwide, it appears that in most of the countries located in the tropical zone the soybean area and production are not keeping pace with the growing demand. Since in these regions soybeans have a considerable potential as a low-cost source of protein for human needs, efforts should be made to remove some of the main constraints to their cultivation which are chiefly related to the insufficient development of suitable cultivars, high incidence of pests and diseases limiting yields and inadequate marketing structure.

I am convinced that the discussions in the present symposium will further contribute to the enhancement of research in these fields.

I sincerely hope that the symposium will be successful and that through our joint effort

friendship and cooperation will be strengthened.

Thank you.