

## Welcome Address

K. YANAGI  
Director-General  
Economic Cooperation Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Participants,

On the occasion of the opening of the First International Symposium on Soybean in Tropical and Subtropical Cropping Systems hosted by the Asian Vegetable Research Development Center and the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, I wish to express my sincere welcome to all of you who are gathered here in Tsukuba today.

This symposium aims at coordinating future directions of research for tropical soybean production, while concentrating on the study of existing cropping systems of soybean in the tropics and subtropics. Soybean is one of the crops on which the Japanese people have long lived. And it may be said historically that soybean protein has been an important source of nutrition for the Japanese people. In this connection too, I believe, it is very meaningful to hold this symposium in Japan.

The food problem in developing countries and regions is one of the most serious issues in the world which require urgent solution. The role that is played by development in agricultural fields is extremely important in overall economic development of developing countries and regions, and this importance, which was stressed by the "World Development Report of the World Bank of 1982", has been well known to us. In this respect, the Government of Japan, though faced with severe financial constraints, has extended through various means active economic cooperation in the field of food and agriculture, bearing in mind that this field constitutes one of the most important areas in its economic cooperation with developing countries and regions.

Since its establishment in 1971 as the organization to conduct research on the improvement of varieties and others which is essential for bettering health conditions of the people in Asian regions, the AVRDC has developed its activities steadily. In the case of economic cooperation for food increase, its effect could be visible in short terms. In the case of such research activities as the AVRDC has been carrying out or economic cooperation for such activities, on the contrary, long-term and steady efforts are required before those efforts actually produce effects. As part of its assistance in the field of food and agriculture, Japan has extended cooperation to the AVRDC in such forms as financial support and dispatch of experts.

Fortunately, Japan has been able to provide the developing countries and regions with accumulated expertise in response to their actual needs and Japan, I believe, is thus contributing to the development of agriculture in the world. As I have been personally involved in Japan's economic cooperation, I have many occasions to talk with Japanese experts who have had experiences in development. I hear of their stories and, through them, know of so many problems that confront us and of the necessity of further extension of cooperation in this field.

I understand that there has been remarkable progress in biochemistry recently and that in the field of the improvement of varieties in agriculture, significant progress has been made. Those who succeed in improving genetic resources can contribute to better controlling food production in the world. Whereas agricultural research is thus being linked with the world food strategy, I am sometimes told that information which can have significant meanings for the improvement in the world food situation has not been fully transferred to developing countries and regions. Therefore, such a symposium as the one we hold here is important, where researchers in the world are gathered,

focus attention on specific areas and gain common understanding about future food problems. As you are aware, the AVRDC takes generous "Open-Door-Policy" on its research outcome, promoting exchanges of germplasm and utilization of its genetic resources. This represents sincere attitudes on the part of the AVRDC vis a vis the improvement of world food situation. I believe that this symposium is held based on the same spirit. It further provides us with an important means for transfer of technology.

I wish to conclude my statement by expressing my hope that all the participants in this symposium will gain benefits from intensive exchange of views during the coming 6-day sessions and will fully utilize them for the benefit of the people of the regions concerned.

Thank you for your kind attention.