

## Welcome Address

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Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor and pleasure on the part of host to have so many distinguished scientists and researchers from home and abroad assembled here today to open this Symposium. To you all I wish to express my deepest gratitude and to the delegates from abroad I take pleasure in extending a cordial welcome to Japan.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan has launched upon the tropical agricultural research from 1966 with tropical and subtropical regions of Asia as object for the time being, and main objective directed to the improvement of agricultural techniques of those regions. And this Symposium is being held as an integral sector of our effort to promote that research.

Countries of Asia are blessed with abundant natural resources, which for the most part are yet to be developed. And agriculture of the regions is also blessed with ample solar energy and rainfall but the utilization there of has not yet been fully achieved. And the level of agricultural production could not be said as high.

In the countries of those regions the improvement of agricultural production, whether it is to increase production of food crops or to improve productivity of international commodity crops, is a vital and urgent national necessity.

Each and every researcher assembled here has, in his respective country, been rendering his utmost and infinite effort toward the improvement of agricultural techniques which are the very foundation of agricultural development, and each researcher is being answered by concrete results in his respective field, on which I extend my sincere respect and congratulations.

Natural resources of Japan are extremely limited. And her natural conditions are not so good as compared with our Asian neighbours in tropical and subtropical regions. However, her agricultural production has witnessed a very remarkable increase. Take rice for example, per hectare yield of about two tons in brown rice in the 1880's has increased more than twofold to about 4.5 tons by 1968 with the total production reaching over 14 million tons.

Such an improvement in agricultural production in the past 100 years is largely due to constant effort to adopt modern agricultural techniques. In other words, since Japan has parted from her self-imposed closed door policy 100 years ago and came into contact with outside world, she has endeavored to positively introduce the advanced Western techniques and moreover, integrated those techniques with Japanese conditions, thus ultimately developing her own techniques. If our Asian neighbours who have such great potentialities can utilize the Japanese experiences in some way or other and accelerate their agricultural development, we shall be much more gratified as a member of Asian family of nations. And this one of the very reasons why Japan has launched upon this tropical agricultural research. Of course, the scale of our research is yet small but we do hope to further expand and develop this program with assistance and cooperation from you. In this connection, you may be interested to know that the Japanese government is now considering establishment of a "Research Center for Tropical Agriculture".

It is hardly necessary to state here that rice is by far the most important staple food to most of the Asian peoples and the production increase of paddy rice is perhaps the most important problem throughout Asia. And fertilizer application is the most effective measure to increase that production. With the prospect of further progress in variety improvement this problem of fertilizer application is becoming more important than ever.

Distinguished Delegates, for the coming 3 days all of us here will try to learn about research findings which each of you has worked out so hard in his respective field. Frank discussion will, I am sure, not only be mutually beneficial but more significant in that it deepens our mutual understanding.

I wish to conclude my address by wishing you all a success of the Symposium and that your research work will prove a still greater impact in increasing the agricultural production in your own country.

I thank you.