

Welcome Address

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Chairman of the Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries Research Council

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, and Participants

It is with great pleasure that I extend my most sincere greetings and best wishes to all the participants in this symposium on behalf of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, particularly I would like to extend a cordial welcome to the delegates from abroad.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan has been promoting research programmes on tropical agriculture since 1966 with an aim of contributing something to the development of agricultural technology in the tropical and sub-tropical region, in close cooperations with many countries in that region. For the time-being its activities are limited to only the Asian region. In order to implement the tropical agriculture research programmes more effectively the Tropical Agriculture Research Center was instituted in June 1970 within the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The center holds an annual international symposium on tropical agriculture as one of the integral part of the activities of the Center.

I believe that the international symposium is one of the best means to offer a forum for exchanging information and discussion for scientists working in many countries on research problems of our common interest.

In recent years, agriculture in the tropical and sub-tropical Asian region has been changing rapidly, even dramatically, from the traditional subsistence farming system to the modernized one. Development of improved varieties of cereals, increasing use of fertilizers by farmers, development of water resource utilization and water control such as flood control, irrigation and drainage, as a result of national efforts and international cooperation to improve the infrastructure for agriculture, and the ambitious attempt for crop diversification and furthermore the diversification of agriculture are, among all, the most salient features of the transition of agriculture now going on in the region. Production increase of food cereals and rising incomes generate a demand for a diet that is of higher quality and more varied. Thus, the pattern of agricultural production needs to be diversified. Under this situation, it would be very significant to hold the symposium which deals with food legumes, because leguminous crop is one of the next important crops to rice in Asian countries.

I am sure that the successful deliberations of this symposium will contribute towards the improvement of production and utilization of food legumes in the tropical and sub-tropical Asian region.

It is thus a distinct privilege for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan to be able to host this symposium and to be able to contribute in some way to the attainment of our common objective of agricultural development.

Finally, I am confident that this symposium yields successful results and the stay in Japan of all overseas participants will be pleasant and fruitful.

Thank you.