

## Welcome Remarks



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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am Kazuhiko Shimada, Deputy Director General of the Research Council Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

According to the International Plant Protection Convention, crop damage due to plant pests is estimated to account for 20% to 40% of losses in food production worldwide. Transboundary plant pests are now a threat to sustainable food production and environmental conservation throughout the world. This is an urgent issue that each country should take the initiative to solve.

In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly designated 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health, to increase awareness on the importance of issues and to stimulate action towards plant pests.

Here in Japan, the occurrence of the Fall Armyworm, a plant pest capable of destroying an extremely wide variety of crops and transferring long distances, was found for the first time in June of this year. We at the ministry are now working with related organizations on measures to prevent its spread and damage.

This April, Japan hosted the eighth meeting of the G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists. In that meeting, Japan, as the G20 chair country, proposed the holding of an international workshop on transboundary plant pests and the strengthening of international cooperation in that regard. This proposal was supported by the G20 countries.

The international workshop is going to be held as a closed meeting to serve as a forum to exchange information and experiences between researchers from different countries at the same venue for three days from tomorrow.

It is very timely to hold this international symposium entitled the “International research collaboration to tackle transboundary plant pests: Contributions to Sustainable Development Goals” as a part of this series of activities.

I would once again like to express our thanks to JIRCAS for hosting this symposium. I sincerely hope that the participants of this international symposium will also gain a deeper understanding of the current risk and threats of transboundary plant pests, as well as future approaches for effective international research collaborations.

And in closing, I'd like to express my hope that today's discussion will serve to strengthen international globalization, protect crops from transboundary plant pests, and lead to stable supply for food worldwide.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

