

(Provisional Translation)

**Welcome Address by Mr. Shuichi Takatori, State Minister of
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan
at the 8th Meeting of G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS)
(Thursday April 25, 2019, at the Hotel Grand Palace, Tokyo)**

1. Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning. First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to those of you who have travelled all the way to Japan to join this meeting today. I am Shuichi Takatori, State Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. It is my great pleasure to be able to hold this 8th Meeting of G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists, or MACS-G20, here in Japan. I am informed that this is the first time ever that delegations from all the G20 members are present at MACS. I think this indicates that G20 members have increasingly high expectations of this meeting. As we welcome you here today, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the Government of Japan.
2. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the number of people suffering from hunger in the world, which had been declining for many years, started to increase again from 2015 onward, and around 800 million people worldwide are now chronically undernourished. In other words, as many as one person in nine is living in an environment where only insufficient food is available. What is more, the global population is expected to grow

to 9.8 billion by 2050, and it is necessary for us to provide these people with safe, nutritious food in a sustainable and stable way. In order to achieve this with the limited resources available, it is essential to further promote agricultural research. All of you present here today play a crucial role in this regard.

3. Meanwhile, in Japan during last year we experienced the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events first-hand with heat waves that were described as significant as a natural disaster, torrential rains in western Japan, and landfall by extremely powerful typhoons. These experiences impressed upon us the importance of agricultural research and innovation in dealing with climate change and reducing natural disaster risk.

4. Yesterday you visited the coastal areas of Miyagi prefecture, which sustained catastrophic damage from the tsunami that followed Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. There you saw examples of efforts to revive agricultural production and generate a new form of agriculture by introducing new technologies. These include cutting-edge technologies in protected horticulture for growing strawberries, and direct seeding of rice, where rice seeds are directly scattered into paddies, a labor-saving technology rarely used in Japan. I hope this field tour enabled you to appreciate at first-hand how agricultural research served as the driving force that turned the areas damaged by the disaster into new food production areas.

5. MACS-G20 is a meeting at which the leaders of agricultural research institutes in G20 nations gather together and discuss topics such as strengthening collaboration among research institutes and promoting international joint research. No single country is capable of solving global issues such as world hunger, eradication of poverty, and dealing with climate change. MACS-G20 therefore offers an unparalleled opportunity to bring together the agricultural research insights of the world's major nations in order to tackle these issues.

6. In this year's meeting, we plan to focus our discussion on promoting international research collaboration on transboundary plant pests and on facilitating on-site adoption of climate-smart technologies.

7. It is said that damage caused by plant pests is responsible for loss of 20 to 40 percent of the global food production. In recent years, the problem of transboundary plant pests has become even more serious, particularly against a backdrop of climate change and increasingly globalized movement of people and goods. It was in this context that delegates at the UN General Assembly in December last year adopted a resolution proclaiming 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health, in order to raise worldwide awareness of the importance of tackling plant pests. I hope that the discussions to be held at MACS-G20 today will serve as a precursor to various efforts during the International Year of Plant Health and enhance the momentum of the international

community's collaborative efforts to address the issue.

8. At the same time, agriculture is a sector vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as well as a source of greenhouse gas emissions. Various technologies have been developed in the area of agriculture to adapt to and mitigate climate change. However, when we try to disseminate these technologies, we face various challenges in making producers change their established practices. I hope, therefore, that we can benefit from the wisdom of everybody here as we consider what approaches are most effective and how best we can promote international collaboration to encourage the adoption of new technologies.
9. As the host country, Japan is willing to facilitate discussions on each topic by proposing to hold workshops to enable the G20 members and other stakeholders to share the latest information and their experiences, and by proposing to strengthen research collaboration including through joint researches and to enhance collaboration with international organizations.
10. On May 11 and 12, Mr. Takamori Yoshikawa, our Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will be chairing the G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting. Niigata prefecture, which hosts the Agriculture Ministers' Meeting, is actually where I come from. The overall theme in this meeting will be "Toward Sustainable Agro-Food Sector - Emerging Issues and Good Practices," and topics to be discussed include the need for innovation to ensure the

sustainability of the agro-food sector and the need for cooperation and knowledge exchange to address global issues. I therefore believe that the outcomes of discussions at MACS-G20 will make a valuable contribution to the ministers' meeting.

11. I sincerely hope that this MACS-G20 meeting will generate productive outcomes that facilitate further research collaboration toward the sustainability of the agro-food sector. I expect those outcomes will also contribute to discussions at the G20 Niigata Agriculture Ministers' Meeting. I would be most grateful if you could engage in active discussions to ensure a sustainable future for the world.

Thank you for your attention.