



**THE SPEECH FOR THE DG KALRO DURING THE SATREPS
SYMPOSIUM ON 6TH DECEMBER, 2016, KALRO HEADQUARTERS**

The Director Crops Management, Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF);

Chief Representative, JICA Kenya Office: Ms. Keiko Sano;

The Chief Advisor SATREP project: Prof. Akira Yamauchi, Nagoya University;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Institute (KALRO) Headquarters for this auspicious occasion. I note that, this SATREPS rice symposium is the first of its kind to be held here in Africa. We therefore feel greatly honored to host it in Kenya and specifically in KALRO.

Ladies and gentlemen,

KALRO is the national premier research organization that was established in 2014 after the merger of Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI),

Tea Research Foundation (TRF), Coffee Research Foundation (CRF) and Kenya Sugar Research Foundation (KESRF). Its mandate is to:

1. Promote, streamline, co-ordinate and regulate research in crops, livestock, genetic resources, biotechnology and animal diseases

Expedite equitable access to research information, resources and technologies and promote the application of research findings and developed technologies in the field of agriculture and livestock.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Government of Kenya identified rice as one of the three major food security crops that also include maize and potatoes where rice is the third most important in terms of food and nutritional security with an annual consumption growth rate of 12% compared to maize at 1% and wheat 4%.

However, there are a number of constraints facing rice production. These include lack of improved varieties with resistance / tolerance to cold temperatures, drought, diseases especially blast, low fertile soils and non-responsiveness to existing agronomic practices within various production environments.

In 2008, local production improved from approximately 80,000 metric tons while consumption was 350,000 metric tons. Today, through interventions by projects like Rice-based and Market-Oriented Agriculture Promotion Project (Rice-MAPP), SATREPS by JICA among others, the annual

production now stands at 149,000 metric tons while consumption is over 540,000 metric tons.

The domestic deficit between production and consumption is met through imports which amount to KES 7 billion annually. This gap is sustained by the steady growth in rice popularity among both urban and rural populations propelled by improved standards of living, attractiveness of rice recipes as fuel-use friendly and its ease of preparation by the now busy population not forgetting its general good appeal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There exists enormous potential for rice productivity in terms of yield improvement per variety from the current 4.0 t ha⁻¹ paddy for irrigated varieties to about 7 t ha⁻¹; and 2 t ha⁻¹ for rain-fed varieties to 4 t ha⁻¹ respectively.

The area under lowland rice production can be increased from the current 40,000 ha to 540,000 ha for irrigated rice and 20,000 ha to 1,000,000 ha for rain-fed rice, if improved varieties are developed. Already KALRO has released four NERICA (rain-fed) varieties namely NERICA 1, 4, 10 and 11 which farmers are growing. This expansion coupled with the development of improved varieties with desirable end-user traits will contribute significantly to self-sufficiency in rice production.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This SATREPS project hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries and implemented by KALRO could not have come at a better time

than now. It is being implemented within the National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) developed through a challenge by the Coalition for Africa Rice Development (CARD) initiative to double rice production by the year 2018, a feat which has already been achieved.

The project has been on-going for the last three and half years and has two arms; research and infrastructure where the research arm is being implemented in Kenya and Japan. The research being undertaken is tailor made and involves hands on molecular breeding and DNA marker-assisted selection. The project will advance the development of rice varieties carrying useful genes/QTLs to overcome stress conditions in Kenya such as drought, low temperatures, high salinity, low fertility, and rice blast disease. This will contribute to improved rice productivity in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is on this premise that this international symposium and a field trip to Mwea have been organised to share information and progress made so far and most importantly develop an international network for tailor-made variety development and cultivation technology for sub-Saharan Africa.

With those few remarks, ladies and gentlemen I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you and God bless you.