

SPEECH BY H.E. MR. HIROSHI FUKADA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN AT
THE OPENING CEREMONY OF WEST AFRICA REGIONAL SEMINAR ON
RICE DEVELOPMENT

Excellency Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment,

Mr. Representative of JICA,

Dear Participants of the West-African Countries,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to speak on the name of the Government of Japan at this opening ceremony of the Seminar on rice growing development in West Africa.

Next year, in June, we will organize at Yokohama TICAD V, the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development. At this time, TICAD which is organized each 5 years since 1993 will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. During the last Conference in 2008, the Yokohama Action Agenda was adopted and Japan promised to promote the increase of food production and the improvement of agricultural productivity, particularly to double the production of rice in Sub-Saharan Africa in 10 years.

The CARD, the Coalition for African Rice Development is one of the best means initiated to reach these objectives. It was created in collaboration with principal actors like JICA and AGRA, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

Japan has a long experience of rice growing but its arable land is limited by numerous mountains. Furthermore, the repetitive natural disasters like typhoons bring about important damages for the crops.

In order to face these difficulties, Japan developed some special technologies and knowledge in various fields such as irrigation, selective breeding or agricultural mechanization.

This year, due to the drought, the sahelian countries, and namely Senegal, are confronted with the serious food shortage.

Japan offered about 58 billions of CFA francs to West African countries for short-term assistances. However, in order to stop the repetitive food crises, we must take into consideration the long term and try to create an unfailing agricultural production system.

Between April 2008 and March 2012, Japan achieved many agricultural cooperation projects in Africa, mainly in the field of rice growing, that means within the framework of CARD, for an amount of 230 billions of CFA Francs. Therefore, Japan succeeded to reach the objective of the amount announced during TICAD IV before the fixed term.

Japan will continue to promote activities and to collaborate with the African countries and the other partners within the framework of the CARD in order to achieve the goals in the fields of agriculture, including the doubling of the rice production in 2018.

We hope that this seminar will furthermore contribute to the rice growing development in the 13 West African countries by the sharing of knowledge and experiences between the participants, and that it will bring fruitful results to the next General Assembly of the CARD scheduled in next February.

Before ending, I would like to express once more, on the name of the Government of Japan, our deep gratitude for the organization and the holding of this seminar which will certainly be successful.
Thank you very much.