Progress of CARD and the Future of the Rice Sector Development in Africa

On August 25, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) co-hosted a seminar on the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD)* at the Sarova Panafric Hotel in Nairobi.

The seminar was officially opened with remarks by Mr. Hiroshi Kato, Vice-President of JICA, and Mr. Willy Bett, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Kenya. The event was also attended by other high-profile participants such as agriculture ministers and high-ranking officials from a number of African countries, the heads of development organizations, research institutions and prominent private corporations, and representatives of rice producers from across Africa. The participants listened to presentations by distinguished speakers on the progress that has been made under the CARD initiative and the future direction of rice development in Africa. Noteworthy participants who commented on the key presentations and shared their views on what Africa should do toward rice sector development included Ms. Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA; Mr. Harold Roy-Macauley, Director General of AfricaRice; Mr. Matthew Morrell, Director General of International Rice Research Institute; Mr. Masa Iwanaga, President of JIRCAS; Mr. Rivo Rakotovao, Minister for Agriculture of Madagascar; and Ms. Marie Jalloh, Deputy Minister for Agriculture Forestry and Food Security of Sierra Leone.

The remarkable progress Africa has made in terms of rice production was confirmed as an outcome of the event, while it was noted that a need remains for continuous, accelerated efforts to meet the rapidly increasing demand for rice in Africa. There were also calls to further production by mobilizing more resources, to implement appropriate policies and to integrate the efforts of rice producers, African governments, research institutions, development partners and the private sector.
The seminar was concluded with an address by Ms. Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA, and with confirmation of the importance of CARD as a platform where all stakeholders can interact, coordinate and cooperate for the development of rice sector in Africa, and of the strong commitment and support for CARD by all the stakeholders present.

- **Speakers**
- **Presenters**
  - Yaw Ansu, African Center for Economic Transformation
  - Morry Diabate, Representative, Côte d'Ivoire
  - George, Regi, Representative, Nigeria
  - George Opara, Representative, Nigeria
  - Keijiro Otsuka, Kobe University
  - Yacouba Dembele, Representative, Côte d'Ivoire

**Welcoming and Closing Remarks**
- Willy Bett, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya (opening address)
- Agnes Kalibata, President, AGRA (closing remarks)
- Hiroshi Kato, Vice-President, JICA (welcoming remarks)

* CARD is a consultative group of bilateral and multilateral donors, and African and international institutions that was launched in 2008 at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference for African
Development (TICADIV) with the objective of doubling rice production in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2018.

CARD provides 23 African member countries and relevant partners/institutions with opportunities for coordination, capacity development and other assistance to support the development of the African rice sector. CARD assistance includes support for formulating a National Rice Development Strategy, through which each country addresses issues along the rice value chain in order to boost rice production. Through such efforts, CARD has contributed to notable achievements, including improvements in productivity and an expansion in the amount of land area under cultivation.