

Welcome remarks for the Tenth Session  
of the East Asia Plant Variety Protection Forum  
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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Myanmar for hosting this 10<sup>th</sup> EAPVP Forum Meeting and for giving us the opportunity to visit this country at an important stage in the development of its agriculture. It is a great pleasure to return to Myanmar, to experience again your warm hospitality and to witness the ongoing development of agriculture in this country.

I would also like to thank the Government of Japan for its financial support for the Forum.

Let me start my remarks by congratulating the EAPVP Forum on reaching its Tenth Meeting.

The EAPVP Forum is a unique forum for countries in the region to reflect on the importance of plant variety protection for the development of agriculture. Over the years that the EAPVP Forum has been meeting, three themes have developed as being of particular interest in our discussions with EAPVP Forum countries: firstly, the impact of PVP and UPOV membership on farmers and society as a whole; secondly, the inter-relation between PVP and systems regulating plant genetic resources; and, thirdly, how to enhance cooperation in the implementation of PVP. I am very

pleased to be able to bring new information in relation to all of these three important areas to this Forum.

*Impact of PVP and UPOV membership on farmers and society as a whole – the case of Viet Nam*

Viet Nam took the decision to introduce a system of plant variety protection just over 10 years ago and celebrated its tenth anniversary of UPOV membership just last year. Therefore, it was very interesting to see the results of an independent study on the impact of UPOV membership in Viet Nam, which was published in April. That Study showed that:

- For Rice, Corn (maize) and Sweet Potatoes: in the 10 years before UPOV membership, increases in yield were mainly through increased level of inputs – there was no detectable increase due to plant breeding
- In the 10 years after UPOV membership, significant productivity increases due to plant breeding were seen, as a result of which current annual yields in Viet Nam are higher in
  - Rice by 16%
  - Corn by 19%
  - Sweet potatoes by 27%
- Furthermore, INCOME of Vietnamese farmers has increased by 24% since 2006
- The annual value added has been calculated for:
  - Arable farming at \$2.3 billion
  - Horticulture at \$1.0 billion
  - Floriculture at \$0.2 billion
- The GDP added upstream/downstream (value chains) amounts to \$1.5 billion, meaning that the TOTAL ADDED to the Viet Nam economy amounts – annually- to \$5 billion (>2.5% GDP)

I would like to offer my congratulations to Viet Nam on these remarkable achievements.

*Inter-relation between PVP and systems regulating plant genetic resources*

UPOV will shortly publish a video produced by the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) of Argentina, in which it explains its program to breed varieties of ornamental species from native flora. At the international level, and within the framework of membership of UPOV, commercialization of the new varieties is through agreements with foreign companies. 50% of the profits that are generated from the commercialization is returned to the provinces that are the owners of the natural resources from which the varieties were developed. The breeding work by INTA also means that the erosion from the natural habitat is reduced, thereby contributing to the conservation of Argentina's native natural resources.

This video provides a clear demonstration of how such systems are mutually supportive.

### *Enhancing cooperation in the implementation of PVP*

I would like to take this opportunity to report that, in UPOV, we are taking steps to help breeders to use the PVP System and therefore to make their varieties available in more UPOV members. The launch of the PBR Application Tool (EAF) at the beginning of 2017 will provide breeders with many advantages, including:

- providing an online application tool even where UPOV members do not provide such a facility
- application forms that can be displayed in range of languages – although answers must be provided in an acceptable language for the PVP Office concerned, many parts will already be translated
- variety data from one application can be automatically re-used in subsequent applications

These are the latest demonstrations of the benefits that UPOV membership can bring to a country and may be particularly of interest for our host country Myanmar, which is currently moving forward with its PVP system.

However, it may also be a timely reminder of the benefits of UPOV membership as the EAPVP Forum celebrates its tenth meeting and reflects on the matters to be considered for future meetings. I mentioned earlier how much Viet Nam has benefited in 10 years of UPOV membership and I hope that we will be able to look back on other successes in EAPVP Forum countries in the future. UPOV is always ready to explore how it can help countries in the development of their PVP systems and we are eager to hear the plans of all the EAPVP Forum countries at this meeting on how they plan to move forward.

With the warm hospitality, excellent venue and efficient meeting organization provided by our hosts, we have a good basis for the meeting. Therefore, with the input from all participants, I am sure that we will have a very stimulating and forward-looking event.

Thank you.